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# DISCUSSIONS ON THE APOCALYPSE



DISCUSSIONS  
ON  
THE APOCALYPSE

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TO  
MY CHILDREN



## PREFACE

THE larger portion of the following volume was originally published in the year 1886, in the form of Appendices to the Author's Baird Lectures on the "Revelation of St. John." When a third edition of that book was called for in the beginning of the present year it seemed, both to the Author and to the Publishers, that it was desirable to separate the Appendices from the Lectures, partly because the topics treated in them appealed to a narrower circle of readers than the Lectures; partly because the growing interest in the subjects discussed appeared to render it necessary to renew the discussion and to bring it down to the present time. The Lectures were accordingly published separately, under the title "Lectures on the Apocalypse," and the promise was given that they would be followed, with as little delay as possible, by a volume of Discussions on the same book. The present volume is an effort to fulfil that promise, and is not to be regarded as a new work. But the Appen-

dices retained have been revised in the light of later investigation, both on the Continent and in England; while the Appendix on "The Unity of the Apocalypse" has been greatly enlarged. This last point had been treated very briefly in 1886, because at that date the unity of the book may be said to have been generally acknowledged, and attacks upon it, after having been suspended for a time, were then only beginning to be resumed. Two Discussions, one on "The relation of the Apocalypse to the general Apocalyptic Literature of the first century," and one on "The relation to one another of the seven Epistles to the Churches, in Chap. ii. iii." have been added. The first of these is an effort to meet the difficulty felt by many, that the author of the Apocalypse cannot be St. John, if St. John be also the author of the fourth Gospel, because it would have been impossible, more particularly when the late date of the Apocalypse is accepted, for the same person to write, within the short period then allowed, two books differing so much both in form and expression. The second of these Discussions, the last in this volume, may, it is hoped, throw some light on the conception and structure of the Apocalypse as a whole, and thus help to prepare the reader for objections of various kinds, taken to a book in every respect so remarkable and unique.

Such are the circumstances in which the following

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Discussions have been written, and such has been the Author's aim in writing. How far he may be justified in what he has tried to do, and how far he may have succeeded in accomplishing his aim, it is for others to judge.

THE UNIVERSITY, ABERDEEN,

*December 1892.*



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*It may be well to give here the full titles of the principal books referred to in the following discussions, omitting those already mentioned in the list prefixed to the lectures of the previous volume.*

BEURLIER.....*Le culte impériale* . . . . Paris, 1891.  
BLEEK, F.....*Introduction to New Testament*,  
translated by Urwick . . . Edin., 1869.

CLARK'S.....*Ante-Nicene Library* . . . . Edin.  
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*The Revelation of St. John*, by Dr. Milligan, referred to as  
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DAVIDSON, A. B....*On Ezekiel, Cambridge Bible for  
Schools* . . . . Cambridge, 1892.

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DILLMANN.....*Das Buch Henoch* . . . . Leipzig, 1853.

„ *Pseudepigraphen des A. T.* in  
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- GLOAG, P. J.....*Introduction to the Johannine*  
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*Library*.
- HILGENFELD.....*Die Jüdische Apoclyptik* . . . Jena, 1857.
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- HOLTZMANN.....*Einleitung in das N. Test.* . Freiburg, 1892.  
 „ *Redr*, 27th January 1892 . . . . . 1892.
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 2nd section, vol. 22.  
 „ *Geschichte der heil. Schriften*,  
 N. T. 6th edit. Braunschweig, 1887.
- ROBERTSON, E.....*Early Religion of Israel* . . . Edin., 1892.
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- SIMCOX, W. H.....In *Cambridge Bible for Schools* . . . 1890.  
 „ In *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v.  
*Speaker's Comm. Introd. to St. John*.
- THOMSON.....Books which influenced our  
 Lord and His Apostles . . . . . Edin., 1891.

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- VOGEL.....*Commentationes VII. de Apoc.*  
*Joannes* . . . . . 1811-1816.
- VÖLTER, D.....*Die Offenbarung Johannis Keine*  
*Jüd. Apok.* . . . . . Tübingen, 1886.
- WARFIELD.....*In Presbyterian Review* . . . . April 1884.
- WEISS, B.....*Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das*  
*Neue Testament* . . . . . Berlin, 1886.
- WEIZÄCKER, C.....*Das Apostolische Zeitalter* . . Freiburg, 1886
- ZELLER.....*Theologische Jahrbücher.*
- ZÖCKLER.....*Kurzgef. Comm. Altes Test., 9te*  
*Abtheilung* . . . . . München, 1891.



## DISCUSSION I

### RELATION OF THE APOCALYPSE TO THE GENERAL APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE OF THE FIRST CENTURY

It would be impossible, even were it more necessary to the object of these discussions than it is, to treat at any length of the striking manifestation of what is commonly known as Pseudepigraphical or Apocalyptic literature by which the closing century of the Jewish and the first century of the Christian Church were marked. Something has been already said of it in the author's volume of *Lectures on the Apocalypse*,<sup>1</sup> and all that can be attempted now is to convey a general impression of its nature and aims. We shall thus be able to form a clearer judgment than would be otherwise practicable, as to the Revelation of St. John, and the place held by it in the religious and literary activity of its age. To enter further into the subject, or to speak individually of the separate works belonging to it, would occupy space that must be devoted to more urgent topics. Although much of this literature has perished, the remains that have come down to us

<sup>1</sup> p. 77, etc.

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embrace treatises of great variety and extent. They bristle, too, with questions of the most intricate and perplexing kind. The dates of their composition, whether as wholes or in their several parts; the language in which they were originally written; the source, whether Jewish or Christian, from which they sprang; the degree to which they have been interpolated at different times or by different schools of thought; and their interpretation, present innumerable problems, very few of which have been as yet satisfactorily solved. As one scholar differs from or contradicts another upon almost every point in regard to which, before we can estimate them aright, we ought to have definite views, we seem most of all to learn the value of the actual verdicts of the Church upon the books submitted to her. Such verdicts may be traditions to us. At the time when they were pronounced, they were the deliberate conclusions of multitudes of learned and intelligent Christian men, who were not less deeply interested than we are in ascertaining the truth upon the questions at issue. It may be quite possible, in one or two separate instances, to show that the verdict of the Church was wrong, but the want of it, even although we might not know all the grounds upon which it would have rested, increases in no small degree the difficulty of estimating aright her non-canonical literature. A separate volume, and that the work of a specialist in this particular field, would be needed to convey anything like a correct impression of the facts.

For our present purpose, however, no such minuteness of inquiry is needed. Without it we may gain a sufficiently accurate idea of the general character of this class of literary productions, of the circumstances which led to them, of the object at which they aimed, of the extent of their circulation, and of their hold on the popular mind. Having gained this we shall be better able to judge of the affinities between them and the Revelation of St. John.<sup>1</sup>

The pseudepigraphical or apocalyptic literature of which we have to speak was in its origin Jewish, although, as we shall see, it passed by a natural and easy transition into the Christian Church, and became as popular with Christians as with Jews. In part it sprang from the distressed condition of the world at the time, from a painful and oppressive sense of "trials, accusations, contentions, revenge, bloodshed, avarice, envy, hatred and all such things. For these are the things which have filled this world with evil,

<sup>1</sup> It may be well to note here a few of the works in which further information upon the Pseudepigrapha may be sought:—Fabricius (J. A.), *Codex Pseudepigraphicus*, *Vet. Test.*, Hamburg, 1722-23, and *Nov. Test.*, Hamburg, 1719; Gfrörer, *Jahrhundert des Heils*, Stuttgart, 1838; Reuss in Ersch u. Gruber, *Johannes*, 2nd Section, vol. xxii.; Lücke, *Versuch*, etc., Bonn, 1852; Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch*, Leipzig, 1853; Dillmann, *Pseudepigraphen des A. T.* in Herzog, xii. p. 300; and Hofmann, *ibid.* p. 320; Hilgenfeld,

*Die Jüdische Apokalyptik*, Jena, 1857; Schürer (Translation by Taylor and Christie), *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, Division ii. vol. iii., Edinburgh, 1886; Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah*, London, 1877; Zöckler in *Kurzgef. Comm. Altes Test.* 9te Abtheilung, München, 1891; Holtzmann, *Einleitung in das N. Test.*, Freiburg, 1892; Deane, in *Monthly Interpreter*, vols. ii. iii., 1885-86; Gloag, *Introd. to Johannine Writings*; Thomson, *Books which Influenced Our Lord and His Apostles*, Edinburgh, 1891.

and vexed the life of men.”<sup>1</sup> But it sprang also and mainly from the extraordinary contrast between the lofty hopes of its future which Israel had cherished and the state of degradation to which in the later centuries of its history it had been reduced. To the intensity of feeling awakened by this contrast the apocalyptic literature is indeed in itself the most striking testimony. No mere description of the feelings with which Israel compared what it was with what it had hoped to be, supposing that such a description had been handed down to us, could have fully revealed, upon the one hand, the prostration of spirit into which the people had sunk, or, upon the other, the passionate expectation of a better future by which they were moved. In this respect the pseudepigraphical writings may be in some degree compared to the marvellous burst of sorrow and wailing which marked so large a part of the population of Scotland on the fall of the Stuart dynasty. In vain should we attempt to explain the flood of grief which then swept over both Lowlands and Highlands by any search into the historical records of the time. Yet the wail remains, and will remain for ever, one of the most striking pictures in the history of the world of the enthusiastic devotion with which a brave, impulsive, and warm-hearted people can be influenced by the power of an idea.

So it was with Israel, if we only substitute the thought of God for that of a human monarch, and

<sup>1</sup> Apoc. of Baruch in *Monthly Interpreter*, vol. ii. p. 124.



devotion to Him for loyalty to a line of earthly princes. During many centuries the Jews had been nurtured in the belief that they were the chosen inheritance of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe. Their history was full of the wonders of His miraculous guidance, and prophet after prophet had been raised up to tell them that the mercies of the past were as nothing compared to the blessings reserved for them in the future. If they recalled with pride all the particulars of the way by which they had been led, they believed that they were destined for far greater glory. Their Messiah, the hope of their nation, the triumphant Conqueror, the irresistible King, who should scatter His enemies like dust before the wind or make them His own and His people's footstool, was immediately to appear; and, with His appearance, every cloud of adversity would be for ever dissipated.

Such had been Israel's hope. How different had been the reality! Conquerors from the east, the north, and the south, had overrun its land. Instead of drawing nearer in each successive generation to the anticipated goal, clouds had gathered over the nation with ever increasing darkness. Even when not directly attacked the sacred soil of Judæa had been the highway and the battle-field of opposing armies. The people had been trampled under foot, sold into slavery, made the victims of every wrong which cruelty unsoftened by compassion could devise, or power unchecked by mercy execute. Mount Zion

had been profaned; its most revered solemnities had been treated with contempt; until, at last, in the terrible days of Antiochus Epiphanes, the very sanctuary and dwelling-place of the Most High, the Holy of Holies itself, had been polluted by the vilest outrage which a wicked blasphemer could conceive,—the pouring out of swine's blood upon its floor and hallowed furniture.

Add to all this that there were no longer any prophets, with their direct message from heaven, to counsel and to cheer.<sup>1</sup> The voice of prophecy had ceased. Though it had still continued, indeed, it would not have met the necessities of the case. The prophet's commission had been mainly to reprove the sins of "the people" themselves, to summon them to repentance, and to warn them of coming judgment. But the sins rampant now were less Israel's than those of its oppressors. The thought of repentance was supplanted by the desire for vengeance; judgment was needed not so much for God's people as for their impious foes.

It was in these circumstances that the Seer, the Apocalypticist, arose, and to them much of the form and style as well as of the contents of his writing was due. He beheld heaven and earth already shaking with the impending wrath of that Almighty God who was about to vindicate His own cause. In visions, in dreams, in the teachings of angels and heavenly messengers, he heard the Divine voice sounding

<sup>1</sup> 1 Macc. iv. 46; ix. 27; xiv. 41.

through the gloom, and the chariot wheels of the great Deliverer at the door. The flame of patriotism and of religious enthusiasm leaped from hill to hill, from valley to valley, from house to house, from heart to heart throughout the land. Fed by the memories of the past and the hopes of the future, no fear or doubt could extinguish it. Struggles, like the noble struggle of the Maccabees with its triumphant issue, began, and Israel was itself again.

It was not unnatural then that apocalyptic writings produced in such circumstances should assume their peculiar form :

1. They were mainly eschatological, or occupied with the end of that course of history through which the world had hitherto been led. It was not of a succession of victories following a succession of defeats that the prophets had spoken ; it was of a triumph at once complete and final ; and religious minds were now less occupied with the nature of the better age to be introduced (for as to that there was no doubt), than with the "how," and "when" it would appear. Even the prophets had felt it to be their chief concern to "search what time, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them."<sup>1</sup> More natural still was it that men should do so now. God had indeed deferred His coming, but He had not really forsaken Israel. Had He not made with it an ever-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 11.

lasting covenant, more enduring than the mountains? He would certainly fulfil His promises, and would do so without delay. The darkest hour of a long night had come, and the morning must be at hand, a morning without clouds. Out of the depths of bitterness the sweetest drops of hope were drawn. The very nature of God required that the present condition of things should be brought to an end, and that immediately and for ever. This hope was forced upon the mind, and the Apocalypticist gave expression to it. Thus also it was that he so often used definite numbers in speaking of the future. It is true that these numbers, framed upon an entirely artificial system, are frequently as difficult to interpret as the wildest figures of speech employed by him; and that thus, even in the Revelation of St. John, so many different meanings have been assigned to them as to make the work of interpretation almost hopeless. But that they were in every case intended to give a more definite meaning to the apocalyptic vision there can be no doubt, and they became so essential to the nature of the Seer's task that, without them, men would have declined to recognise his apocalyptic gift.

2. In doing so he used, instead of his own name, that of one or other of the great names of Jewish history. We need not imagine that it occurred to him that in thus acting he practised any real deception. God, to whom the end is as much present as the beginning, had unquestionably foreseen every-

thing that had either happened or was yet to happen, and had even shadowed it forth in His earliest dealings with His people. It was not an unlikely thing that when He inspired His prophets in ancient times He might have told them more than they had actually recorded. What was now to be spoken might be considered to be not less His truth than anything these prophets had uttered. Why not use their names? <sup>1</sup> There was an obvious advantage too in doing this. That Moses, Elijah, Baruch, Solomon, Ezra had spoken as they were made to do was a proof that, however strange to the existing generation might be the events happening around it, they had not been strange to the God of their fathers. He had foretold the darkness. When therefore He foretold the light the fulfilment of the one prophecy was a pledge that the other would likewise be fulfilled. For similar reasons, arising out of the state of the time, the names thus chosen were generally those of men of action rather than of words. The Twelve Patriarchs in "The Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs," Moses in

<sup>1</sup> Dillmann is even of opinion that the writers of these books did not expect that what they wrote would be really thought to have proceeded from the men whose names they used. "On the contrary," he says, "the great number of such books, constantly produced, is a proof how lively was the consciousness of their recent origin, and how familiar was the use of this literary form "

(Herzog, *Real-Encyk.* vol. xii. p. 302). It may be difficult to conceive that it should have been so; but it is certainly not impossible that the employment of the ancient name might lend authority in the popular mind to statements which there was no intention of ascribing directly and immediately to him who had borne it.

“The Assumption of Moses” and “The Book of Jubilees,” Elijah in “The Revelation of Elijah,” Baruch in “The Apocalypse of Baruch,” Ezra or Esdras in the book now known as “The Fourth Book of Esdras,” were selected rather than persons associated with what we commonly understand as the prophecies of the Old Testament. Action was demanded. Men who had done great deeds rather than uttered reproofs ought to be the inspirers of the new campaign. None could recall so well as they the most signal epochs in the history of Israel, and their very names were fitted to rouse later generations to deeds worthy of their sires. At the same time it ought not to pass unobserved that this ascription of these writings to men who had long since died is a proof that the writers realised the fact that the freshness of the old prophetic spirit was gone. Had their whole being, like that of the genuine prophets of Israel, been possessed by the conviction that they had a direct message of God to deliver to His people, they would both have named themselves and created for themselves new forms of utterance in which they would themselves have spoken. The consciousness of being animated by the Spirit of God, instead of repressing, strengthens and unfolds the individuality of man.

3. The pseudepigraphical writers dealt largely in the strange, to us indeed the often fantastic, figures to which Israel had been accustomed. God’s prophetic revelations of Himself and His mode of action had always been expressed in the Old Testament by

symbols and emblems which the West could not have originated, and which it is hardly able even to comprehend. But, such as these were, the Divine stamp was upon them. They could not therefore be neglected when any one would unfold the will of God in the particular sphere to which they belonged. Nor could the Apocalyptist experience any difficulty in passing from the plain language of simple instruction or exhortation to the more figurative strain employed by him in speaking of the future. The style was not that of the man but of the subject, and the subject could not be appropriated without being accompanied by the style.

4. It can occasion us no surprise that this literature should have occupied itself not only with the fortunes of Israel, but with many other problems which must have had great interest for the inquiring mind. Writers left to the working of their own fancy, and unguided by that Divine inspiration so strikingly manifest in the singleness of aim with which the Canonical writers devote themselves to the moral and spiritual redemption of mankind, naturally endeavoured to solve the perplexing questions which the thought of the universe around them forced upon their notice. Hence a large part of the pseudepigraphical literature of the time was devoted to questions of angelology and astronomy. Nature as well as religion had its mysteries; and the seeker after knowledge, whether in its more general form, or its more particular form as *Gnosis*, was entitled to the instruction which he

desired. The particular form of the pseudepigrapha is thus easily accounted for.

A not less important inquiry for our present purpose has relation to the amount of popularity which the pseudepigraphical and apocalyptic writings enjoyed, and to the degree to which they penetrated the thoughts and life of their time. It is not possible to enumerate them. The titles of many have in all probability irrecoverably perished. But enough is known to tell us how multiplied and widely circulated they were. The names of several have been already given. In addition to them, and embracing for the moment the pseudepigrapha of the New Testament and of heathenism, as well as of the Old Testament (for all are witnesses to the point before us), we read of The Book of Adam, The Book of Lamech, The Book of Noah, The Book of Abraham, The Book of Joseph, The Prophecy of Eldad and Modad, The Assumption of Isaiah, The Revelation of Peter, of Cerinthus, of Thomas, of Stephen, of Bartholomew, of Mary, The Sybilline Oracles, and many more. So numerous are they that Zöckler, dealing only with those of the Old Testament, divides them into five groups,—the Lyrical, the Historical, the Apocalyptic, the Testamentary, and the Oracular, of which the largest is the third; while the fifth, a heathen group, affords a singular illustration of the extent to which a taste for this class of literature prevailed both before and after the beginning of the Christian era. Further proof upon this point is



not wanting, for in 4th Esdras<sup>1</sup> we read of ninety-four books written by the five "swift writers," whom Ezra was instructed to select for the purpose of transcription, twenty-four of these being the canonical books of the Old Testament, the remaining seventy, books of the nature of those that we are now considering; while a not less striking testimony to the wide circulation of some at least of the pseudepigrapha is given by the fact that of 4th Esdras itself four translations are known—the Syriac, the Arabic, the Armenian, and the Aethiopic.<sup>2</sup> Besides these there is every reason to believe that there were many short apocalyptic writings in circulation (perhaps like the apparently short gospels alluded to in Luke i. 1, the existence of which, could it be demonstrated, would so materially aid in the solution of the synoptic problem); and such writings by means of their brevity would exercise a powerful influence upon the general mind.

To whatever extent, however, we may be doubtful upon this last point there is everything to assure us that literature of the kind in question was extremely extensive and popular. Dillmann<sup>3</sup> speaks of such books as the "special books of the people," and as far better fitted than the learned writings of the same period to convey to us a lively picture of the thought, the life, and the efforts of the time. Schürer says that "the actual *effect* of those enthusiastic predictions appears to have been both powerful and lasting" . . .

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiv. 44.

<sup>3</sup> In Herzog, *R. E.* vol. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Zöckler, *u.s.* p. 444. p. 304.

and that "if revolutionary tendencies among the people grew stronger and stronger year by year, till they led at last to the great insurrection of the year 66, then there cannot be a doubt that this process was essentially promoted, if not exclusively caused, by the apocalyptic literature."<sup>1</sup> Zöckler, too, describes their number as "certainly very considerable";<sup>2</sup> and Harnack declares that even "the Jewish Apocalypses were read in the Christian communities."<sup>3</sup>

The remarks hitherto made have had reference mainly to the Jewish pseudepigraphical or apocalyptic literature, but they apply with equal propriety and force to the literature of the early Christian Church. That that peculiar style of literature should pass from the one church to the other, and that it should take as deep a hold of Christians as of Jews, was indeed unavoidable. Even the heathen mind shared the feeling that the period of sin and sorrow through which the world was passing was about to be followed by a golden age of righteousness and peace.<sup>4</sup> Much more did the Christian Church, composed largely of converts from Judaism, and brought into the closest contact with the prophets of the Old Testament, learn to feel, with all the strength of Israel's convictions, that He was a God who judgeth in the earth, and that a rectification of the balance of human wrong and wretchedness must be at hand. The outward circumstances of Judaism and Christianity

<sup>1</sup> *u.s.* p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> *u.s.* p. 403.

<sup>3</sup> "Revelation" in *Ency. Brit.*

<sup>4</sup> Virgil, *Ecl.* iv.

were also so much alike that some of the deepest experiences and expectations of the one could not fail to resemble those of the other, and to find utterance in a similar form. We have seen in the previous volume<sup>1</sup> through what depths of trial the Christian Church had to pass in the second half of the first century, and the nature of her hope. That hope was again what it had been before,—The Coming of her Messiah, of her Lord, not indeed in His first Advent, but in His second glorious return. He was to come even for the same purpose (though in a more spiritual form) as that which had brightened the hopes of Israel! Let us put ourselves into the position of the members of the Christian community from the middle of the first century onward; let us suppose that their cruel persecutions were ours, that our longings might be expressed in language almost the same as theirs, that we like them were sick with hope deferred, and that apocalyptic visions were the form in which the religion of the age has long sought and found its consolations. Let us suppose this, it is only a true description of the time,—and, so far from being surprised by the use of apocalyptic language in the mouth of one who would cheer us, we shall look for it. It will be the natural language of the prophet or the poet, the natural gift of which we may expect the Divine Spirit to avail Himself when He would bid our hearts be strong.

These considerations prepare us for the composition of a book like that known as *The Apocalypse of St.*

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, v.

John, whether we accept its earlier or its later date, but especially if we think that, upon the whole, the later is to be preferred. If it differs from the other books of the New Testament, it is because its aim and the age to which it belongs are different, and these two correspond closely with one another. As it lies before us in our Bibles we are apt to regard it as a unique manifestation of religious or literary thought, and to be prejudiced against it on that ground. But it ceases to wear this aspect when we remember the large amount of writings of a similar kind which, in the same generation, were circulating in the Church. The *à priori* probability is rather in favour of the appearance of such a book. The power of the Divine Spirit as it wrought in the Apostolic age had certainly not been exhausted in the tenth, and still less in the seventh decade of the first century; and even an Apostle, in addressing himself to men, would be led to use the forms in which they were accustomed to dwell upon the topics of which he wrote.

While, however, the method of the Apocalypse has thus a close relation to the literary method of its age, we shall go astray if we do not also mark important points of difference between it and the works, so far as they are known to us, of the Pseudepigraphists of its day.

1. Its author names himself as one belonging at least to the then existing generation of Christian men. He may not have been the Apostle John, but he was at all events a "servant" of Jesus

Christ<sup>1</sup> who wrote, on the lowest supposition, between thirty and forty years after the Death and Resurrection of his Lord, when the Apostle John was certainly alive. Why does he not write under cover of some far more ancient name? It will not do to answer, Because he was writing a Christian revelation, and he could not go farther back than the beginning of the Christian era. Other pseudepigraphists invariably did so. Jewish writers were not the only ones who availed themselves of the great names of the Old Testament. Christian writers did so too. Almost every apocalyptic writing, whether springing from the orthodox church or the heretical sects, propitiated the favour of men by resting itself upon the authority of some well-known name of the Old Testament. Here is a notable exception to the rule; and, whatever other inferences may be drawn from the fact, it offers at least a clear line of demarcation between the Apocalypse of the New Testament and the pseudepigraphists of the day.

2. The contents differ. Those of the common writings of the kind are of a very varied character. We have seen that they are not confined to religious truth. The Book of Enoch deals largely with the secrets of the natural world, with the sun and moon and stars, with the places of the winds, and even with the geography of the earth, its seven highest mountains, seven greatest rivers, and seven islands. Perplexing questions in theology, too, meet us, such as the Fall of the Angels, the effects of the sin of Adam upon his

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 2.

posterity, the fact that the serpent in the Garden of Eden was able to speak, and the difficulty occasioned by the thought that so few are saved. Again, as in the Book of Jubilees, numerous details relating to the early history of the world, which are not mentioned in Scripture, are given, while the legendary lore connected with the history of Abraham has been described as "a study in itself."<sup>1</sup> At other times, as in the Apocalypse of Baruch, we meet long dry dissertations upon moral duty, the spring and spirit and life of Christianity being altogether wanting.

3. There is nothing in which the difference between the Canonical Apocalypse and the multitude of pseudepigraphical Apocalypses which were in circulation first in the Jewish and afterwards in the Christian Church more strikingly appears than in the tone by which these writings are severally marked. That there should be a large amount of thought common to both is easily understood. When, in any age, the foundations of society seem to be overturned, and when the hearts of men are torn by the misery around them, the wildest and most fanatical schemes of reform are always based upon the inextinguishable persuasion that behind the confusion there is a moral order of the universe, and that it is the duty of every well-wisher of the race to endeavour to realise it. The excesses, whether in thought or action, of which in these circumstances men are guilty, may draw forth our condemnation. In the first instance they ought

<sup>1</sup> Deane in *Monthly Interpreter*, vol. ii. p. 278.

to awaken our pity. Whether it be Anabaptists in Germany, or Communists in France, or Nihilists in Russia, or Anarchists in England, they have to a large extent been maddened by the condition of the time; by the terrible contrast between what is and what yet must be unless Satan, not God, hold the empire of the world, combined with the despairing conviction that, if there be no prospect of improvement, it were better, for very order's sake, that all things should go to wreck, and that the whole earth, like her satellite the moon, should return to the eternal silence of an extinct volcano. We can understand such men and feel for them. At bottom they have a faith, an aspiration, and a hope in no small degree similar to our own. But, with whatever feelings we may regard them, they inevitably arise. "With the noblest conception," says Drummond, "when committed to the custody, not of a select few, but of a whole people, it is inevitable that low and selfish thoughts should mingle. While times of calamity answer a holy purpose in raising men's minds to the contemplation of a divine order to which the world must ultimately be conformed, yet they are times when men of inferior spirit are prone to dream dreams, and to see visions, in which the products of a higher faith are fantastically blended with imagery born from the terror of defeat, the rage of helpless suffering, and the lust of revenge. In such times false prophets abound, and ready credence is given to what satisfies the dominant passion." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish Messiah*, p. 181.

These words accurately describe the character of a very large portion of the inferior matter which is found side by side with loftier aspirations and higher thoughts in the pseudepigraphists so eagerly read in the first century of the Christian era. The expected Deliverer is for the most part an earthly conqueror effecting the ends, and distinguished by the characteristics, of a triumphant general of the day. The victories which He secures are for Israel alone, and to it all other nations shall be subjected. Jerusalem is to be the metropolis of the coming King, and the Temple, if a "new house," is to be erected in its old place.<sup>1</sup> The religious nature of Messiah's rule often sinks entirely out of sight. At times, as in the Assumption of Moses, the thought of the Messiah to come almost, if not wholly, disappears. "There is no hint of a conquering Messiah, of a Son of David who should restore the dominion of Israel and reign a mighty king over an innumerable people. The Zealot could not contemplate the accession of any earthly monarch to the government of the chosen nation; his hopes centred in the restoration of the theocracy and the visible rule of Jehovah."<sup>2</sup> It is hardly necessary to say that the blessings of the Divine rule thus to be established are of a material and earthly, not a spiritual kind. Goodness and a righteous life are indeed spoken of as elements of human happiness, but the thought of a kingdom, "not of this world," and of

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Drummond, *Jewish Messiah*, p. 312.

<sup>2</sup> Deane in *Monthly Interpreter*, i. 342.



looking not at "things seen and temporal" but "unseen and eternal" is absent.

To unfold the contrast between all this and the tone of the Apocalypse of St. John would involve an examination of the whole teaching of the latter book, and it is impossible here to enter upon such a field. We have already had occasion to speak of it in the Lectures, and it will further meet us when we consider the relation between the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel. Enough has been said to show that the pseudepigraphical writings of the closing period of Jewish, and the opening period of Christian history, while in form so much resembling our Canonical Apocalypse, were about as distinct from it in spirit as are the Apocryphal Gospels from the Gospels of the Canon. <sup>x</sup>

The illustrations of the tone and character of these writings hitherto made use of have been chiefly drawn from the Jewish Pseudepigrapha, and it may be supposed that we cannot reason from them to Christian writings of the same class. The supposition is hardly warranted by the facts. The early Christian Church, even beyond the bounds of Palestine, consisted very largely of Jewish Christians, and these must have been the most important members of the Christian communities. Gentiles turned to them, not they to Gentiles. Gentiles became converts to their faith, received their sacred books, and adopted the main features of their worship. They must, at least in most instances, have had the distinct pre-eminence. <sup>x</sup>

Besides this, the very sensuousness of their expectations of the future appealed quite as strongly to Gentile as to Jewish hearts in their natural condition. What was acceptable to the one could have no difficulty in finding acceptance with the other. The New Testament Pseudepigrapha sustain this view; and Reuss justly complained that the wide distinction drawn by many between the expectations [always excepting those relating to the person of Jesus] entertained by these two sections of the community, is to a great degree responsible for the misapprehensions so often shown as to the meaning of the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup>

These books then were very widely read by Christians as well as Jews in the first Christian century. Let us think of this. Let us bring before us, with a distinctness in some degree at least corresponding to the reality, the very large amount of this literature which was in circulation, and one or two inferences may be said to be inevitable.

1. It was natural that some one in authority, perhaps an Apostle of the Lord, if any such still lived, should write a new Apocalypse which might substitute wisdom for folly, truth for error, the principles of the Divine plan in all its spiritual and universal character for the earthly, narrow, and fanatical ideas entertained of it. It was the more natural to do so, because, in this respect differing from their predecessors, so many of the Pseudepigrapha of the New Testament made a claim to canonicity. The minds of Christians could

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der H. S.*, etc. §§ 140, 143.

not fail in such circumstances to be thrown into confusion, and an authoritative or inspired teacher could hardly fail to recognise that an obligation rested upon him to do his best to settle them.

2. If this was to be done it is obvious that such a teacher would attain his end most successfully by adopting the style which had become so closely connected with instruction of the kind. Neither the century before nor that after the coming of our Lord expressed its hope of His advent in common language. Both used bold, startling, to us almost unintelligible figures,—the sun turned into darkness, the moon into blood, cloud, fire, and vapour of smoke. Such had been the language of the Old Testament prophets; such that of our Lord when, in His discourse upon the “Last Things,” He spoke on the same topic.<sup>1</sup> It became, accordingly, the language of all who spoke or wrote upon these subjects. To us it may seem the most imaginative poetry. To the men of those days it was, in relation to its particular subject, the language of prose. By means only of such figures as are employed in it could they adequately express their thoughts. Other words would have appeared tame, inappropriate, and imperfect. What wonder then that when a

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv.—It appears unnecessary to discuss the wholly gratuitous conjecture thrown out by Harnack that this discourse is itself a Jewish Apocalypse inserted in the body of the Gospels. The conjecture is without a tittle of evidence in its support, and is

disproved by much in the discourse. Conjectures of this kind made at random by able men, whenever they see no other way of overcoming a difficulty, render discussion of many a point of early Christian history almost hopeless.

Christian writer entered into the region of Eschatology he should adopt the only language which he had been accustomed to think suitable to his theme, or in which alone he had been in the habit of contemplating it? He did not need to go to other Apocalypses in order to find appropriate figures. These were in the air. They were in the mouth of every one who breathed the atmosphere of the Church's hope. The thought of Messiah smiting the nations not with the ordinary instruments of war but with the "word of His mouth," of Messiah standing upon Mount Zion, of the preparation of a splendid banquet for the righteous when Christ came to reign: even the thought of men killing one another in the days of judgment, until the horse should walk up to its breast in blood<sup>1</sup> were not strange thoughts then. They were common property, not book-figures but figures of daily life; and when the Seer was occupied with similar thoughts, no language would come to him more easily, or obtain from his hearers so ready a response.

Let us suppose, near the close of the first century, an aged disciple sitting, as we know such a one was wont to sit, with a small circle of younger disciples at his feet. He has been relating some of the incidents of the life of Jesus, and some of the words that fell from the lips of the Master so revered, so loved, so mourned. He quotes the words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have

<sup>1</sup> Book of Enoch, chap. c. 1-3; see also Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, pp. 302, 305.

overcome the world." Suddenly the whole situation in which he and his hearers are placed flashes upon him—their persecutions and sorrows, their longings and expectations. His heart burns and his eye kindles. He is "in Spirit"; and he rushes on to speak of their cross and the coming triumph. What will he do but adopt the language most familiar to him in connexion with his subject? The calmness of his previous language will pass away. He will burst into the tropes, the similitudes, the figures which upon that point the Church is accustomed to employ; and, if his words are then committed to writing, his book will be one resembling in its general character the Revelation of St. John. Its strangest passages will not appear to us inconsistent with the quieter style in which the same disciple might previously have written, or might even then write history. In reality he is only using the language of his day. Nor need we suppose that he is copying from other Apocalypses. Some thoughts he may take from them, although proof will be needed to assure us that he does so. But even then what he borrows and what is given directly to himself become welded into one.<sup>1</sup>

3. In comparing the Apocalypse with other similar writings of its age the distinction between a wide-

<sup>1</sup> It by no means follows that even the most peculiar parts of Revelation, *e.g.* the attack and defeat of Satan at the end of the 1000 years, are taken from some contemporary Apocalypse. We might be disposed to think so

when we find the same idea in the Book of Enoch, chap. xxviii. 7, and in 4th Esdras, chap. xiii. 5. The true explanation is that the idea in each case is taken from Ezekiel, chaps. xxxviii. xxxix. Commenting upon these chapters

spread use of any book in the Church, and the Church's verdict upon it, ought to be borne in mind. It would appear that in the first Christian century, as well as in the nineteenth, the popular acceptance of a professedly religious work was no real criterion of its value. Was it full of misapprehension or error, the extent of its circulation rather constituted a demand for the Church's judgment; and a judgment, which in these circumstances could hardly fail to be adverse, has all the more weight because it was formed deliberately, and against the inclination which would have made it more easy to swim with the popular current than to contend against it. This was the relation of the Church to these pseudepigraphic writings on the one hand and to the Apocalypse of St. John on the other. However men may try in our day to class them together as if they were in every respect of precisely the same type, the Church saw the difference between them. She unhesitatingly set aside the one, but placed the other in her Canon.

Dr. A. B. Davidson makes the following remarks which seem to be both just and applicable to our present subject:—"The prophet is not the author of the idea of this invasion. It has been predicted of old by the prophets of

Israel prophesying over long periods (xxxviii. 17; xxxix. 8). Neither is it probable that the idea was one read out of certain prophecies only by Ezekiel. More likely it was an idea widely entertained."

## DISCUSSION II

### THE UNITY OF THE APOCALYPSE

UNTIL within the last few years the student of the Apocalypse might have been justified in holding that any lengthened discussion as to the unity of the book was unnecessary. It might have been asserted with the utmost confidence that there was no other New Testament book to which unity of authorship had been ascribed with more unhesitating conviction in all ages of the Church and by all inquirers. It had been assigned as a whole to different dates in the author's life. Some portions of it had even been thought to belong to one period of that life, and others to another. But that it was the production of one mind had seldom been seriously disputed; or, if disputed, the theory of a various authorship had found no firm or lasting footing. To so great an extent had this been the case that commentators had often felt no call to discuss the question. Nor could it be denied that they might plead high authority for the course thus taken. Bleek, one of the ablest and most impartial inquirers, after having had many doubts upon the point, had publicly retracted them;

and that was of itself enough to satisfy.<sup>1</sup> Lücke, too, after long and patient investigation, had declared that, one concession as to the structure of a single passage being made, "the hypothesis of an original various authorship was not only wanting in everything that might seem to afford it ground of support, but that the original completeness and unity of the work might be regarded as positively and thoroughly established."<sup>2</sup> Under these circumstances the question appeared to have been set at rest.

In recent years it has been reopened, and valuable contributions have been made to the subject by many scholars. The first name to be mentioned is that of Vogel;<sup>3</sup> but he was so completely answered by Lücke<sup>4</sup> that it is unnecessary to refer further to him in this place. The real reviver of the controversy may indeed be said to have been Weizäcker,<sup>5</sup> who, after submitting the book to a partial analysis, came to the conclusion that it presented much more the appearance of a single author piecing together various documents which lay before him than of different re-workers of the whole. Something may have to be said of this view hereafter.

Weizäcker's more general remarks had indeed been preceded by the definite theory of Völter.<sup>6</sup> Both

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Eiul.* p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> *Versuch*, p. 887.

<sup>3</sup> In his *Commentationes vii. de Apoc. Joann.* 1811-1816.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Versuch*, p. 873, 2nd edition.

<sup>5</sup> In his *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, 1st edition, 1886, p. 509.

<sup>6</sup> In a work entitled *Die Entstehung der Apokalypse*, the first edition of which appeared in 1882, the second in 1885.



were followed by what is known as the Vischer-Harnack theory, an undoubtedly important step in the controversy.<sup>1</sup> After that, many other inquirers in Germany, Holland, and France came into the field, of whom an elaborate list, together with a brief statement of their several theories, has been given by Holtzmann.<sup>2</sup> Of these, in addition to the two already named, it seems necessary in the meantime to mention only Pfeiderer (the others will be hereafter more particularly alluded to), who in his *Urchristenthum*<sup>3</sup> has explained his views with considerable fulness. To the three inquirers above mentioned then—Völter, Vischer, and Pfeiderer—we shall for the present confine ourselves, noticing at the same time some utterances of the late lamented Simcox of Cambridge, which appeared first in the *Expositor*,<sup>4</sup> and then in the third Excursus appended to his Commentary on the Revelation of St. John.<sup>5</sup> A consideration of the theories associated with these names will convey to the reader a sufficiently accurate idea of the general course of argument pursued by those who deny the unity of the Apocalypse. Having considered them, we shall be in a better position for turning to positive arguments in favour of the unity of the book.

<sup>1</sup> In Gebhardt and Harnack, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, ii. 3, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> *Einleitung*, 3rd edition, 1892, pp. 412-414.

<sup>3</sup> 1887, p. 318, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Third series, vol. v. p. 545.

<sup>5</sup> *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, 1890, p. 155.

## I

1. We begin with Völter whose Treatise on the subject first appeared in 1882. He was indeed immediately answered both in his own country and in Holland and America. In particular Professor Warfield, then of Allegheny, Pa., in the United States, now of Princeton, examined the treatise in a manner so well-informed, careful, and exhaustive as even to justify a feeling of satisfaction in the minds of many that the attack had been made.<sup>1</sup> There seemed to be danger that the higher criticism, in itself so valuable, might suffer through one of its latest manifestations. In these circumstances it will not be necessary to enter into many particulars. A very brief sketch of Völter's argument, and of the manifest objections to it, may suffice.

According to this critic the Apocalypse may be divided into five different parts, belonging to eras of the Church more or less remote from each other, and written by at least four different persons. These parts are not indeed loosely attached to one another. Those first written interested the Church at particular points of her later history to such an extent that authors were induced not only to add to, but to revise, them. The new was fitted into the old with care and skill. Interpolations of longer or shorter passages were made in order to bring the additions into harmony with the original writing, and thus the

<sup>1</sup> *Presbyterian Review*, April 1884.

book passed through several recensions, assuming its final form between A.D. 160 and A.D. 170. The arguments leading to this conclusion are four,—the want of sufficient connexion between different parts of the book; its repetitions not demanded by the course of thought; its representations resting upon historical persons and events long subsequent to the date from which much of it cannot be separated; and finally its dogmatical, more particularly its christological, ideas in different parts, too widely divergent from each other to permit of their being reduced to the single type which must have proceeded from a single mind.

Our space is too limited to permit our taking up in detail each of these four points with the view of illustrating the author's method of treatment. One illustration belonging to the chronological argument must suffice. In Rev. xiii. 11 we meet with the second beast, and Völter is so satisfied with the identification he discovers of this beast that upon it, as "a thoroughly ascertained result," he feels he can take his stand, in order to determine the exclusion of a series of other passages of the present from the original Apocalypse. With great interest, therefore, we naturally ask after the grounds of this conclusion. They are as follows: The beast from the "land" of chap. xiii. 11 evidently occupies a position of close proximity to, and contrast with, the beast from the "sea" of chap. xiii. 1. The latter beast, however, is the Emperor Antoninus Pius, for in the

Sibylline books we read of an emperor who "bears the name of the neighbouring *sea*" (which must be Hadria), and we are thus led to think first of Hadrian, but immediately afterwards of his adopted son and successor, who incorporated his predecessor's name with his own,—Titus Actius Hadrianus Antoninus Pius. It is true, no doubt, that the person to be identified as the false prophet or second beast did not exactly come from the "land" *in contrast with* the "sea," for he was born at Ionopolis or Abonoteichos, a small town on the coast of the Euxine; but the contrast between "sea" and "land" is only to be thought of in a general way (this had hardly been the case with "sea"), and as intended to bring out that there is something very definite in the distinction between the first and the second beast. Pursuing our inquiry we now learn from Lucian that in the days of Antoninus, the first beast, there flourished a very famous impostor of the name of Alexander of Aboiroteichos; and the characteristics of this presumptuous deceiver so closely resemble those of our second beast that, taken in conjunction with the proof already given that Antoninus is the first, we can have no hesitation in assuming that we have found the second. For (1) Alexander styled himself a prophet, and Lucian styles him a "false prophet," the very description of the second beast in Rev. xvi. 13; xix. 20; xx. 10. (2) The second beast "spake as a dragon" (chap. xiii. 11), and Alexander, in order to delude the people, had fastened the representation of a dragon's head to a serpent, and

then had so connected these by strings with a tube and an attendant that he could make the dragon's mouth open and shut, its tongue dart out, and a voice issue from it proclaiming the oracles of God. The second beast of the Apocalypse has indeed two horns "like unto a *Lamb*" (verse 11), and it is only its *voice* or its *utterances*, not its head, that is like a dragon's, but the word "dragon" occurs in both cases, and how can the reader fail to be convinced? (3) The second beast caused "that as many as should not worship the image of the (first) beast should be killed." Alexander on one occasion commanded the bystanders to stone an Epicurean who had ridiculed his rites; and the murder would have been effected had not the scoffer been rescued. In addition to this Alexander always displayed peculiar enmity to the Christians. (4) The second beast caused all to receive a mark on their right hand or upon their forehead. Alexander caused small images of his dragon-god to be circulated in great numbers, and the people "perhaps" regarded them as a charm. (5) The second beast made fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men (verse 13). Alexander, it is true, did nothing of the kind, but the Apocalyptist lived so far away from the scene of that deceiver's working that the report of what he did might easily have taken an exaggerated form by the time it reached him. (6) In the Apocalypse we read of worship of the first beast only (verse 15), not of worship in the second, while in Lucian's account of Alexander we read of

worship of the second beast only, not of worship of the first; but the Apocalypticist allowed the two cults to flow together into one, while the close relation between them is established by the fact that the Emperor (the first beast) caused coins to be struck bearing upon them the image of Alexander (the second beast). (7) This mingling of the two cults also explains the circumstance that, while the inhabitants of the earth make an image to the first beast, Alexander fashions only *his own dragon god*, without thought of thereby increasing the worship of the Emperor. The author of the Apocalypse had been led to confound the worship of the second beast with that of the first. (8) Lastly, the same circumstance explains the transference to the first beast of that *coercion* to worship which, in Lucian's story, has reference only to the worship of the second beast.

The illustration of the higher criticism thus given may be left to make its own impression on the reader, and from it the nature of the arguments adduced by Völter to prove his point may be sufficiently judged of.

2. The Vischer-Harnack theory is the next that meets us; but again we need hardly dwell long upon it, for although, when first promulgated, it probably made more impression than Völter's, it may be doubted whether it is not going faster, if indeed it be not already gone, to that land of forgetfulness to which the Charon of the German critical world has conducted so many shadowy and hapless forms. This

theory derived peculiar importance from the fact that Harnack himself, whose pupil Vischer had been, devoted a special chapter to its commendation, declaring that when he read it the scales had fallen from his eyes. Language of this kind from a scholar of such high and well-deserved reputation gave a standing to the hypothesis which it might otherwise have failed to secure. Whatever the opposition it encountered it was received with attention and respect; Völter being, so far as known to us, the only exception to this. That critic immediately published a reply,<sup>1</sup> in which he denounced his opponent's work as possessing no claims to be considered a scientific investigation, as in a high degree superficial and frivolous, even as almost a piece of April fooling.<sup>2</sup> Treatment of this kind was unwarranted, and it is only now referred to as helping to justify the demand that those who attack ancient and long-received opinions shall be more agreed among themselves before treating these opinions in the contemptuous style in which they so often indulge.

The main principle of Vischer's theory is simple. According to it the Apocalypse in its present form is the adaptation to Christian thought and expectation of a purely Jewish apocalyptic writing. The Christian editor had taken that writing as it stood, but had prefixed and added matter of his own in order to Christianise it. The two portions are easily dis-

<sup>1</sup> *Die Offenbarung Johannis Keine ursprünglich Jüdische Apokalypse*, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> p. 48.

tinguished from one another, the first being found in chaps. i.-iii., and chap. xxii. 6-21, while all lying between this prefix and appendix is the original Apocalypse. The middle portion, however, had not been left in its purely Jewish form. It had been to a considerable extent interpolated; and the whole had then been published under the name of the Apostle John for the edification and comfort of the Christian Church.

In noticing this hypothesis little need be said of the improbability that a Christian writer, desirous to encourage his fellow-believers by the immediate prospect of the Second Coming of their Lord, should resort to a book emanating from a community which did not believe in His First Coming, and which was marked by the most extreme fanaticism both of hatred to the Gentile and of Jewish pride.<sup>1</sup> Had the contention been that the book was Judæo-Christian, the argument might have been more plausible. But that it should have been thought necessary to transform a Jewish Apocalypse of the narrowest and harshest type into a Christian writing is hardly conceivable. Apocalyptic authorship was not so rare that it should have been difficult for the Christian Church to produce something of its own. The allegation, however, is made, and ought to be examined.

(1) It is obvious that, if Vischer's theory be correct, our present Apocalypse must in all passages not interpolated reveal its Jewish character. Does it

<sup>1</sup> Compare for this estimate of the Jews of the time, Pfeleiderer, *Urchr.* p. 343.



do so? Chapter vii. 1-8—for verses 9-17 of that chapter are regarded as an interpolation—is said to be conclusive upon the point. The 144,000 there sealed are Jews. But no Jew could have entertained the idea that only that number of Israel would be saved. The departure from the usual designations of the twelve tribes is, with such a reference, altogether inexplicable; and, when we again meet the same number in chapter xiv., they are said to have been purchased out of *the earth* and from among *men*. Whatever else may be thought of the sealed ones in this passage they are certainly of Christian, not Jewish, faith.<sup>1</sup> A similar conclusion may be drawn from chapters xi. and xii., two chapters upon which Vischer places great reliance. It is true that he does not accept the chapters as they stand. Various distinctively Christian expressions are struck out. But even allowing for the moment that these were interpolations, a just interpretation of the rest will leave only one conclusion possible—that we are dealing with Christian and not with Jewish thought. For, again, how could any Jew have admitted the idea that only a portion of the inhabitants of “the Holy City” would be preserved in the coming storm? and that at a time when the Almighty was about to visit them with afflictions in which, as in former periods of their history, they would doubtless be rather

<sup>1</sup> Harnack distinctly allows this in his article on “Revelation” in the *Encycl. Brit.* He refers the vision to “Christians

generally without respect of nationality.” Reuss takes the same view.

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brought to a new birth. Or, if it be replied that the description given in verse 1 is of only pious Jews, we are more at variance with Jewish ideas than before. How could even the most pious Jews be allowed to worship in that *ναός* which was reserved under the most sacred sanctions for the priests alone? The thought that the distinction between it and the other parts of the temple buildings had been done away, and that the privileges of the very high priest were now open to the humblest member of the community, is one of the most purely Christian thoughts of the New Testament. In the mind of a Jew it could not possibly have a place. Or, why should it be so difficult to believe that the two witnesses of chap. xi. 3 are Christian witnesses? The meaning of this part of the chapter seems to be mistaken alike by Vischer and most others. For those spoken of are not, like the Baptist, witnesses to a Christ who is to come. They witness to a Christ *already come*. Such is the constant meaning of "witness" in the Book of Revelation. Christ is Himself the "faithful" and "true witness," and the only witnessing which the book knows is that borne in Him, and to Him, as the exalted Lord, amidst trials similar to what His had been, and in hope of a reward like His. Nothing can be less Jewish or more Christian. Remarks leading to the same conclusion might be made upon the remaining portion of chap. xi. and upon chap. xii. It may be enough to say in reference to the latter, that no idea more distinctly

opposed to all the Jewish thought of the time can be imagined, than that the Messiah to come was to be born into the world as a child who should be immediately persecuted by Satan, but be caught up for safety to the Throne of God, to return thence at a future day in triumph. The chapter cannot be explained unless we find in it Christianity instead of Judaism.

If this conclusion may be reached in the case of particular passages, it is still more forcibly brought home to us when we look at the Apocalypse as a whole. To think that that book with all its details of religious persecution, of sorrow, and of blood could have been written by a Jew of the first century, or that it reflects a faithful picture, though used by the editor for another purpose, of the religious relation of the Jews to the Roman Empire, is to mistake the character of the time. That the Jews groaned under the Roman yoke, that they were often rebellious against the Roman authorities, and on that account severely treated by them is true; but this was the case only when Rome beheld in them unfaithful citizens. Even "the war which terminated in the ruin of Jerusalem was purely political."<sup>1</sup> To the Jewish faith Rome was in a high degree tolerant, going even so far as not to insist that the ordinary coins circulating in Palestine should be stamped with the image of the Emperor.<sup>2</sup> "Dispersed throughout

<sup>1</sup> Beurlier, *Le Cult. Imp.* p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Holtzmann, *Rede*, 27th Jan., 1892, p. 9. The incident men-

the Empire, the Jews lived at peace in the discharge of the obligations of their religion. The Emperors exempted those whose duties called them to the Court from every practice contrary to their faith, and they were in consequence dispensed from serving as Municipal Flamens or Augustan Seviri." <sup>1</sup> How is it possible to think that in these circumstances the persecutions spoken of in the Apocalypse could apply to them? That book is one of martyrdom not for the maintenance of civil rights but of religion, and religion alone. The martyrs die, not because they refuse to give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but because they refuse to give to Cæsar the things that are God's. If we suppose them to be Jews, as upon Vischer's theory we must, the history of the fortunes of Judaism in the first century of the Christian era will need to be re-written.

We can have no hesitation, therefore, in coming to the conclusion that, apart even from individual texts, the tone and spirit of the Apocalypse, the condition of things which it supposes, and the warnings and encouragements which it contains show that it is not a Jewish writing. Eliminate from it every longer or shorter passage, every clause, and every word supposed by Vischer to be the interpolation of a Christian pen, there remains enough to show that it admits of no in-

tioned at Matt. xxii. 17, and parallels, might easily have reference to one of those foreign coins which must at the time of the great festivals have been brought

in numbers to Jerusalem from Gentile lands.

<sup>1</sup> Beurlier, *u.s.* Cp. also the testimony of Josephus to Nero's mildness to the Jews, *Antiq.* xx. 8, 11.

telligible or consistent interpretation which does not proceed from a Christian instead of a Jewish point of view.

(2) When changes have been made upon a passage in order to Christianise it, we are entitled to expect that these, if perhaps not exactly plausible, shall at least be natural, and such as may be adopted without violence or absurdity. In this respect the hypothesis now under examination entirely fails. One example may suffice—in chap. v. 6, we read of “a Lamb, standing as though it had been slain” (or rather “slaughtered”), “having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.” According to the view of Revelation taken by Vischer and Harnack the words “lamb” and “as though it had been slain” must of course be eliminated, and the process by which this is accomplished is well worthy of notice. In the first place the words “as though it had been slain” in combination with the word “standing” are removed from the text, because representing a state of circumstances not easy to be conceived. In the second place, as there must be a subject spoken of in the sentence, and as the word “lamb,” with its Christian associations must everywhere disappear, the probability is that instead of a lamb we ought to read “a lion,” the lion of verse 5; or, if that be thought too bold a change, it is suggested by Harnack that we may regard the word “standing” as itself the subject. The last conjecture may be dismissed without further remark; but the first is thought to find confirmation

in the facts that, not adopting it, we have two contradictory Messiahs in the book; that the thought of seven horns is more befitting a lion than a lamb; that the Hebrew term for a lion, לָאוֹן, bears when pronounced a strong resemblance to the Greek ἀπρίον, and that the word ἐνίκησεν, in verse 5, is to be translated not as an aorist indicating a past victory, but as a present, "has the power." Of criticism such as this it might surely be enough to say with Beyschlag that it is "groundless conjecture which does not deserve to be refuted";<sup>1</sup> or with Völter, that it is "the height of giddiness of the brain";<sup>2</sup> or with Spitta, that it is one of the grossest blunders of criticism.<sup>3</sup> But it is of more consequence to remark that it strikingly illustrates that utter misunderstanding of the leading idea of the Apocalypse as a whole which the writers now under review exhibit. The fundamental conception of the book is the very conception declared by them to be impossible,—neither human weakness upon the one hand, nor Divine power upon the other, but Divine power victorious through apparent human weakness, life triumphant over death.

(3) The whole system of excision practised by Vischer is guided by no principle but that of wilfulness and desire to escape difficulties. The rule acted on is simply, but with perfect accuracy, defined by Spitta—"Everything that is Christian is interpolated."<sup>4</sup> Upon

<sup>1</sup> *Stud. u. Krit.* 1888, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *u.s.* p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Schwindel auf der Potenz,

<sup>4</sup> *u.s.* p. 69.

*u.s.* p. 21.

the application of this rule to the excision of the word "lamb," wherever it occurs, there is no time to enlarge. The following instances may suffice,—in chap. xiv. 10, we are told of the worshipper of the beast, that he shall be tormented "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb"; and the only attempt to excuse the cutting out of the last of these two clauses is (here Völter agrees with Vischer) that it is awkwardly (*ungeschickterweise*) placed *after* instead of *before* the first, as if the interpolator, supposing the objection to be well founded, would not have been as much alive to the unfitness as his critic, and as if the principle of climax were not everywhere, both in large and small matters, employed in the structure of the book. A still more interesting example is the description in chap. xv. 3 of the song sung by the victors upon the glassy sea, "The song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb," where again the argument is not only that the latter clause is out of place, but that the combination is inappropriate. Vischer has failed to observe that both the combination and the order are the very reverse of this, for the song is designed to celebrate what God has done, both in Old and New Testament times, for that one Church which He has always guided and guarded in the same way.

It may be thought by many that we have spent too long time over this hypothesis, but it is one of the most notable of recent years; and it was only by going into it with some measure of detail that a

proper idea of its argument against the unity of the Apocalypse could be conveyed.

3. The last theory that we propose to consider is that of Pfeleiderer in the work already mentioned. He has given us ample opportunity of doing so, for in that work he presents us with his analysis of the whole book. Yet, with the exception of criticisms on a few individual passages, it cannot be said that he has contributed much to the solution of the question. His theory is substantially that of Vischer,—that we have in the book a Jewish Apocalypse re-wrought and re-edited by several Christian hands; but Pfeleiderer's authority as an inquirer into the ideas and books of the earliest Christian age is deservedly high, and it may be well to look at the details of his scheme.

The first three chapters then proceed from later editors of the book. Both in substance and form they differ so materially from what follows that it is impossible to ascribe them to the same author. The great difference in form is of course palpable to every eye, and at a later point we shall have something to say in explanation. In the meantime we call attention only to the fact that the Epistles to the seven churches can by no means be regarded as “occupied *exclusively* with the then existing condition of the communities to which they address their words of praise or blame, of exhortation or consolation, of threatening or promise.”<sup>1</sup> That they do present us with real particulars of that condition is not to be doubted; but there is much to

<sup>1</sup> p. 321.



show that the features of the churches spoken of are selected and grouped upon a plan ;<sup>1</sup> and that, though the Epistles are certainly free in form from the singular figures by which the body of the book is marked, they exhibit an artificialness of arrangement more striking than in the case of anything that follows, and thus even at the very outset convey the impression that we are not dealing with an ordinary work. Nor can Pfeiderer be said to be successful in explaining away the bond of connection between chap. iv. 2 and chap. i. 10. The words in the first of these passages, "I was in spirit," he regards as an interpolation by the later editor in order to bind to the original Apocalypse the introduction he is prefixing to it. In that case we might have expected "on the Lord's day" to be also added. It seems, moreover, to have been forgotten that the expression "I was in spirit" occurs four times in the book,<sup>2</sup> each time at a crisis in the development of the visions, and that it thus leads us to think of unity rather than diversity of authorship. Lastly, it may be noticed that even in the seven Epistles the figurative language is often of so pronounced a kind that Pfeiderer himself compares it to descriptions contained in the Book of Enoch.<sup>3</sup> In saying this, we do not positively contend that the first three chapters of our book are from the same pen as those that follow, but only that there is a measure of approximation between the two parts which forbids

<sup>1</sup> See Discussion VI. of this volume, p. 269, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. i. 10 ; iv. 2 ; xvii. 3 ; xxi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> p. 322, note.

the assertion that the writer of the earlier could not at the same time be the writer of the later. Chap. iv. must indeed be regarded as one of those parts which have occasioned Pfeleiderer that perplexity of which he often complains. He leaves us in uncertainty whether to ascribe it to the original Apocalypticist or to the Christian editor. This uncertainty is dispelled in the case of chap. v., which is Jewish,<sup>1</sup> but interpolated. The proof relied upon for the last statement is chap. v. 14, where it is said that "the elders fell down and worshipped"; a statement which, we are told, had been already made in chap. iv. 10, and v. 8, and would not therefore be repeated. But we had been told nothing of the kind in these passages; and, in a book composed with such extraordinary care as the Apocalypse, it is of supreme consequence to attend to the actual words before us, and not to what we too hastily imagine them to be. At chap. iv. 10, the verb to worship is in the future, *προσκυνήσουσιν*; at chap. v. 14, it is in the aorist, *προσεκύνησαν*; at chap. v. 8, it does not occur.<sup>2</sup>

Passing to chap. vi. it is again left uncertain whether we are to regard it as an original part of the Jewish Apocalypse interpolated by a Christian editor, or as wholly Christian. The former is apparently the case; for, by a common misunderstanding of the passage, the vision of the 5th Seal is applied to

<sup>1</sup> p. 324, note.

<sup>2</sup> On the bond of union and Christian character of chaps. iv.

and v. the writer would refer to his *Comment.*, *in loc.*

Christian martyrs instead of the martyrs of the Old Testament dispensation ; while the words, "and from the wrath of the Lamb," in verse 16, are spoken of as certainly interpolated. Confirmation of this last idea is found in the reading *αὐτοῦ*, said to be the original reading, instead of *αὐτῶν*. No reference is made to the fact that, in deference to what they believe to be the most ancient and valuable authorities, *αὐτῶν* is read by Tregelles, Tischendorf, and Westcott and Hort.

When we pass to chap. vii., it can awaken no surprise that the vision of the sealing of the 144,000 out of all the tribes of the children of Israel is considered to be not Judæo-Christian but purely Jewish. It goes, indeed, far beyond the teaching of the Old Testament prophets, and is the very quint-essence of a fanatical hatred of the heathen and of Jewish arrogance.<sup>1</sup> How came such a passage, we may ask, to be allowed its place in a Christian edition of that old Apocalypse ? and it is worth our while to note the answer. In the first place, there is a distinct and deliberate correction of it in the vision of chap. xiv. of the Lamb upon the Mount Zion with His 144,000 around Him. This number is taken from chap. vii., not that the two masses are the same, for they are not the same. They are the very opposite of each other, the mass in chap. vii. being the élite of the most narrow-hearted Jewish particularism, that in chap. xiv. the ascetic élite of Christian individualism.

<sup>1</sup> p. 343.

Having thus emphasised his contrast by using the same figures, 144,000, applied in a different way, the Christian editor was satisfied. But how did he satisfy himself at an earlier stage of his work? Or how did he allow so many chapters to intervene before he relieved his mind? He did not wait to accomplish this till he came to chap. xiv. The second vision of chap. vii., of the multitude in heaven which no man could number, came from the same pen and with the same intention. It is a deliberate corrective to the sealing vision, and is intended to vindicate the position of Christians gathered out of all nations. What is effected in chap. xiv. by filling the mould of 144,000 with wholly different contents is effected in chap. vii. by the addition of a different scene.<sup>1</sup> Thus also may be explained why in the Mount Zion vision of chap. xiv. "first fruits" are spoken of. The number 144,000 could not be departed from, but it was far too small for the great Gentile Church. To lend it, therefore, greater verisimilitude it is applied not to Christians in general, but only to ascetics, the Church's most honoured members. No criticism upon all this is needed. The wilfulness of construction, without the slightest warrant in the text, refutes itself.

Of chaps. viii. and ix. little is said. They constitute too fantastic a representation (*eine durchaus phantastische Dichtung*) to supply any key to the scenes they represent, but they appear to be Christian.

<sup>1</sup> p. 342.

We are next met by the verses extending from chap. x. 1 to chap. xi. 14, but only to be thrown into greater perplexity than before. At chap. x. 7 we expect to be informed of the contents of the 7th Trumpet; there is nothing of the kind until we reach chap. xi. 15. The inference is that probably a wholly different passage once stood here, and that what we now have is the work of an interpolator. We might ask how the interpolator came to do his work so clumsily, especially as it would be a natural effort upon his part to find a break in his original into which his own lucubrations might easily, and without the appearance of effort, be inserted. But we need not ask such a question. It is allowed that the interpolator has displayed no skill in attaining his end; for, what with the command from heaven contained in chap. x. 4, and the counter-command contained in verse 11 of the same chapter; what with the impossibility of identifying the two witnesses in chap. xi.; what with the expectations entertained of the approaching fate of Jerusalem in chap. xi. 13, which only show that the prophecy must have been uttered before the city fell; and what with the misplaced remark at the close of verse 8, we are forced to one conclusion, that "historical incidents and ideal conceptions have been mingled together in wild confusion."<sup>1</sup> The whole section is probably Jewish with the exception of the words in chap. xi. 8 already spoken of, which are due to some Christian editor.

<sup>1</sup> p. 329.

Chap. xii. is said to be Jewish, being obviously an ideal representation of that theocratic supremacy of Israel which, though it may be hidden for a time, again bursts forth in triumph. But the work of the Christian interpolator is also observable in verse 11. He shows that he is a totally different person from the original writer of the chapter, for he ascribes to "the blood of the Lamb and to the word of their (the Christians') testimony" that victory which four verses before, at verse 7, had been ascribed to Michael and his angels. Christian interpolation appears also in verse 17.

Chaps. xiii. and xvii. correspond so closely that the conclusion formed by us as to the one must apply also to the other. Both chapters thus in their original form are Jewish, but they have been tampered with in the same spirit and for the same end as so many others. Thus that the devil gives his authority to the first beast or the civil power (chap. xiii. 4) betrays Jewish rather than Christian thought,<sup>1</sup> for the Apostle Paul shows us what the latter is when he says, in Rom. xiii. 1, that "the powers that be are ordained of God." The *kind of power* of which the two different writers were thinking, and the relation in which it was placing itself to Christians, are not for a moment taken into account. Other indications point the same way. Yet there are Christian interpolations, as mention of the Lamb in chap. xiii. 8, and the general strain of the two following verses. So also in

<sup>1</sup> p. 338.

chap. xvii. 6, it is difficult to comprehend that a Christian narrator should have described the woman as drunken from two sources, "the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." It is much more natural to suppose that a Christian Apocalypticist found, in a Jewish document before him, mention only of the first, and that in order to Christianise the document he added the second.<sup>1</sup> He also inserted verse 14, and the reasoning that leads to this conclusion may be for a moment noticed. That verse, it is first to be observed, has no connexion with the context. The context, as it stood in the document about to be modified, was intended to describe the march of the returned Nero against Rome. But by the time the Christian interpolator set to work the fabulous story about Nero had vanished into air, and Christians, exposed to the terrible persecutions of Domitian, had begun to apply the prophetic picture to that *other* Nero. But Domitian could not be described as marching against Rome. The Christian editor therefore, to make things suit, substituted the Christian Church for Rome, and the persecution of Domitian for Nero's march. At the same time in direct opposition (*im strikten Gegensatz*)<sup>2</sup> to what he found lying before him, he changed the victory of the beast over the saints<sup>3</sup> into a victory of the saints over the beast.<sup>4</sup> In justice to Prof. Pfeiderer it ought to be said that he disclaims any attempt to force this interpretation

<sup>1</sup> p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> p. 340.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xiii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xvii. 14.

upon us. He is only satisfied that the more we think of it with an unprejudiced mind, the more shall we be pleased with its simplicity and with the light thrown by it upon the manner in which, through the re-editing of an old Jewish Apocalypse by a Christian redacteur, the canonised Apocalypse assumed its present form.

Of the first part of chap. xiv. we have already spoken, but Pfeiderer's treatment of the second part, verses 6-20, is too instructive to be passed over. This part he regards as altogether Jewish, filled indeed with the narrowest and most bloodthirsty thoughts of Jewish vengeance. Verse 20 could not possibly have proceeded from a Christian, and the allusion to the Lamb in verse 10, as well as the whole of verse 13, must be looked on as interpolations. Prof. Pfeiderer has failed to notice the remarkable structure of this section of the book which he is analysing. It may be that the "other angel" mentioned in verse 6 has a reference to the angel of chap. x. 1, no other having been mentioned in the interval. But however this may be, he has at least as close, if we may not say an even closer, relation to the angels that follow in this chapter, of whom the next mentioned, the angel of verse 8, is expressly called "a second" (later reading), and the angel of verse 9 "a third." Passing to the remaining "angels" of the chapter we have another at verse 15, another at verse 17, and another at verse 18. Between these two groups let the reader carefully mark the description in verse 14, without a



doubt that of the Messiah introduced to us in chap. i. 13. That is, we have a group of seven (the sacred number) parts, a group in which the central member is always the most important, shedding its light alike upon what precedes and upon what follows.<sup>1</sup> A little more attention to structure, often by no means the least important guide to interpretation, might here have saved the critic with whom we are dealing some very hasty observations.

Chaps. xv. and xvi. call for no special remark; and, so far as concerns our present purpose, chap. xvii. has been already considered in connexion with chap. xiii. Of chap. xviii. it need only be said that its tone is thought to be better adapted to a Jewish than a Christian Apocalypse; while chap. xix. contains unmistakable signs of Christian interpolation in a Jewish book, such as verses 8-10 and verse 13. The only doubt is whether we have not in this last instance a much later editor than any whom we have yet met, one who sought to introduce into the Apocalypse in his hands the Logos ideas of the second century.<sup>2</sup> Of chap. xx., it is said to be difficult to determine whether it is of Jewish or Christian origin.

<sup>1</sup> The same mistake, which when we think of the inferences deduced may almost be called inexcusable, had been made by Weizäcker (*Apost. Z.* p. 508), who also alleges that the small piece, chap. xiv. 1-13, must be regarded as a separate (*besonderes*) one, because three angels, who

are numbered, appear in it, while there is no continuation of the scene. He too had failed to notice the central pivot, in verse 14, around which the whole turns, followed by the three other angels in the remaining verses of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> p. 347.

With chap. xxi. a new era begins, a new heaven and a new earth taking the place of the old. But verses 5-8, as indicated by the repetition of *καὶ εἶπεν, καὶ λέγει, καὶ εἶπεν*, and by the echo of words found in the seven epistles and again to meet us at the close of the work, may be supposed to proceed from the interpolator. Not so the description of the new Jerusalem, which is Jewish, although the use of the singular pronouns *αὐτοῦ* and *αὐτῷ* in chap. xxii. 3, 4 may be considered a proof that the mention of "the Lamb" in addition to "God," in chap. xxii. 1, 3, and also in chap. xxi. 14, 22, 23, 27, is an interpolation, no notice being taken of the fact that at least in chap. xxi. 14 the words *τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων*, which are surely as Christian as the words "the Lamb," are left standing, and that in verse 23 the clause, "and the lamp thereof is the Lamb," is absolutely required by the law of Hebrew parallelism. The epilogue of the book, chap. xxii. 6-21, is from the pen of the re-worker, who prepared the first three chapters.

It would thus appear, according to Pfeleiderer, that the main contents of the Apocalypse, extending from chap. iv. 1 to chap. xxii. 5, are taken from two Jewish documents, with changes and interpolations introduced at the points already noted. These are due to the re-worker of the whole; while chaps. i.-iii. and chap. xxii. 6-21 were introduced by a different person, a second editor. Chap. xvii. shows that the "re-worker" belonged to the reign of Domitian; allusions in the

seven epistles show that the "editor" belonged to that of Hadrian. Along with introduction and conclusion, the "editor" added at the same time the last clause of chap. xix. 13 and perhaps other things. The difference between the "re-worker" and the "editor" is further confirmed by the fact that there is in the work of the latter no mention of the Lamb, spoken of twenty-nine times in that of the former. Not only so, even in the main body of the work we see that two Jewish Apocalypses have been pieced together, so that we have thus four authors in all engaged on it before it receives its final shape.

Upon this theory of Pfleiderer's it is hardly necessary to say more than has been said in tracing its particulars. The simple statement of it will be to almost every reader its most effective refutation. Connected as it is with misunderstandings of the original as in chap. vi. 9; with readings of the Greek text apparently false, as in chap. vi. 17; with wilfulness of conjecture, as at chap. vii. 9 and xiv. 1; with want of consideration for the structure of the book, as at chap. xiv. 6-20; with a magnitude of change utterly at variance with the idea of interpolation, as at chap. xvii. 14; with perpetual transition from one Jewish document, and one Christian editor, to another; and throughout destitute of all sympathy with the spirit of Eastern poetry, it is impossible to accept, hardly possible even to understand, the theory. The same charge may be brought against it, and other theories of a similar kind, that has been so often

brought against those who would explain the similarities and divergences of the Gospel text by an appeal to an endless multitude of documents—that all these documents spring from the liveliness of their own imaginations, start up only because there is a difficulty to be overcome, and cannot produce a tittle of historical evidence for their existence.

Remarks similar to this last apply to theories of still later inquirers, such as Spitta and Schmidt; and, without going into detail, it may be urged with no small degree of confidence that, where each successive theoriser first overthrows the theory of his predecessor, only to find his own immediately thereafter share its fate; where one supposes the groundwork of the book to be Jewish, another to be Christian; where the same passages are ascribed by one to a Jewish, by another to a Christian interpolator; where one looks upon everything as literal, and another upon everything as figurative; where, in short, no two opponents of the unity of the book agree, but all are mingled in a general movement of inextricable confusion,—where, we say, this is the case we are fully entitled to conclude that no theory has yet been proposed with any just claim to replace the tradition of the Church. It does not, of course, follow that some new theory may not yet be suggested which shall be more successful. Simeon<sup>1</sup> has even thrown out hints as to what such a new theory, which would “require serious attention,” may be. But as he does “not”

<sup>1</sup> *Comm.* p. 173.

himself "believe" the hypothesis the outline of which he gives, examination of it may be spared.

## II

It is time, however, to inquire whether the Apocalypse does not afford positive signs of unity of authorship, which ought at least to be taken into account by those who would come to a deliberate conclusion upon the question. Many such may be mentioned, though it is impossible to speak of them so fully as we could wish.

1. The hypothesis of unity has possession of the ground; and it occupied it without dispute from the beginning for eighteen centuries. Nor was the whole of that period uncritical. Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria are standing testimonies to the contrary. The propriety, too, of receiving the book into the Canon was for centuries disputed in the Church. It does not appear that those who opposed it, or who denied that it could have proceeded from St. John, ever attributed it to a variety of authors. There may not be very much in this, but it is something. Had tradition spoken of several authors great weight would have been justly attached to it. A certain measure of weight can hardly be refused to the same principle of tradition when it speaks of one author, and one alone.

2. One author claims the whole book as his. It will not be denied that the person who introduces

himself to us in chap. i. 1 as "John" desires to be regarded as the same "John" who names himself at its close, in chap. xxii. 8. These portions of the book are no doubt allowed to proceed from the same pen even by such as maintain that the middle section, containing the visions, proceeds from another and a different one. But the point immediately before us is not affected by that consideration. The John spoken of in chap. i. 1 looks forward to visions which he is about to describe: the John spoken of in chap. xxii. 8, no less looks back upon visions already described. He thus intends us to understand that he is the author of intervening visions of one kind or another; and, without distinct proof to the contrary, there is a certain likelihood that these may be the very visions which the book contains.

3. The book is marked by one object and pervaded by one thought. Any other impression, such as that very commonly entertained, that it is designed to represent the triumph of Christianity first over Judaism and then over Heathenism arises from false interpretation. The author moves throughout in a sphere superior to both these religions. He deals with evil in its most general form, and with that reign of Christ by which a universal righteousness shall be established in the world. His own thought is the glorious coming of the Lord, and His victory over every adverse influence, without regard to separate nationalities, or separate cities such as Jerusalem or Rome. And he aims at impressing this thought upon

the reader with a freshness, vividness, and force which breathe the spirit of one particular period, if not even of one particular prophet of the time. Through all scenes however diverse, through all figures however varied, this thought appears. It strikes the key-note of the book, "the time is at hand."<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Epistles to the seven churches it is spoken of as if, though never distant, it were pressing nearer and nearer, till at last the Lord is heard knocking at the door.<sup>2</sup> The cry of the opening visions to the Saviour is "Come."<sup>3</sup> Later in the visions the moment arrives when there shall be "delay no longer."<sup>4</sup> At different points the Saviour actually manifests Himself in judgment upon His enemies, with fulness of blessing to those who wait for Him;<sup>5</sup> until at last, roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm "the Spirit and the bride say Come," and "he that heareth says Come," and the Lord who has testified these things exclaims "Yea, I come quickly," and the Seer himself replies "Amen; come, Lord Jesus."<sup>6</sup> This immediateness of the Lord's coming pervades the whole book, as well those parts supposed to be a Jewish Apocalypse as those that have sprung from a Christian interpolator or re-worker; and, wherever the thought occurs, it is connected with the same earnest impassioned longing for its accomplishment. In this respect the unity of the book is undeniable; and again there is a *primâ*

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. 20; comp. p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. x. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Chaps. xi. 17; xvi. 17; xix.

11, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. xxii. 17, 20.

*facie* probability that a book claiming to be the work of one author, handed down as the work of one author, and full from first to last of the same eager anticipations, is really the work of one rather than of several.

4. The book is marked by distinct unity of plan. The question here is not as to the insertion of one or two short sayings which appear to disturb the flow of the narrative, such as chaps. xiii. 10, xiv. 13, xvi. 15. We may easily suppose that a book, the acceptance of which throughout the Church was delayed for an unusual length of time, would be more liable to interpolations of this kind than the other books of the New Testament. But even allowing that the texts above referred to may be interpolated, the unity of the whole is not substantially affected. No one would dream of contending against the one authorship of the fourth Gospel because it contains the *pericope* of the woman taken in adultery? Besides which, the assertion that such texts as those above quoted are interpolations ought to be accompanied by some explanation as to how they came there. The presumption is that an interpolator was as much alive to continuity of narrative as his critic, and that the supposed interpolations may after all belong to the original. Why were they introduced at these particular points? Why were more suitable halting-places not found for them? or, if the interpolator did not look upon his sentences as interruptions, perhaps neither did the first author. In a book which professed to be communicated by visions, by sudden exaltations of the Seer into the



unseen, and by multiplied "hearings" of heavenly voices,<sup>1</sup> it is not unnatural that words should occasionally fall upon the writer's ear which he would not have thought of had he been only a calm narrator of events witnessed by him in real life. Texts therefore like those under consideration present no difficulty. Nor do even longer passages, like chap. vii. 9-17, affect the question to any appreciable extent. Even Simcox<sup>2</sup> has difficulty in determining whether the vision contained in these verses may not be an interpolation, but his conviction as to the unity of authorship is not disturbed. We may pass therefore from such smaller points in order to look at the matter in a larger and broader light.

Has the Apocalypse a plan? In the volume of Lectures on the book, we have not only urged that it has, but have endeavoured to show at considerable length what the plan is.<sup>3</sup> The point at least admits of argument, or so distinguished an inquirer as Reuss could not speak as he does, in what was probably his latest work, of its "in the highest degree skilful and throughout symmetrical plan."<sup>4</sup> In the face of a testimony like this it will not do to treat the book as a mere congeries of unconnected scenes, which, gathered together from different sources, possess no unity of thought. We urge, on the contrary, without hesitation, that there is not another New Testament

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. v. 12; x. 4; xii. 10, and many others.

<sup>2</sup> *Comm.* p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> Lect. III.

<sup>4</sup> *Geschichte der H. S. des N. T.* 6th edition, 1887, p. 147.

book through which there may be traced, and that without doing violence to the interpretation, a more deliberately conceived and thoroughly executed plan. Nor will it do to say that such a view is inconsistent with the freedom of the Spirit when communicating with the writer by means of visions. Men ought to recognise the fact that visions are not less a language than words, and ought to feel that the Spirit of God, in whatever way He approaches the soul, is a Spirit of order and not of confusion. The constant repetition of the same truths, though in reality they are not exactly the same, in the three great series of visions,—the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls,—is by no means inconsistent with the idea that all proceeded from one writer. It may not have been (we believe that it was not) his purpose to represent the visions as successive. He may have intended them to be parallel, going over the same period of the Church's history, though looking at it from different points of view. This would be in perfect consonance with other parts of his procedure, as when we read at chap. xi. 19, and again at chap. xv. 5, of the opening of the temple. Weiss<sup>1</sup> no doubt regards the two openings as "an insoluble contradiction." It is not so. The temple itself, the *naos*, is certainly the same in both cases, but in each it is viewed in a different aspect. In the first it contains "the Ark of the Covenant," reminding of mercy. In the second, as "the Tabernacle of the Testimony," it contains the tables of the law by which

<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung*, p. 374.

God witnessed against Israel. The two descriptions do not betray two writers : and the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls may upon the same principle have proceeded from the same writer, although they lead us to a thrice repeated end. Thus also when many critics<sup>1</sup> object to the two visions of chap. vii. because they disturb the transition from the sixth to the seventh Seal, and to those of chap. x.-xi. 13 because they disturb the succession of the last two Trumpets, it is a sufficient reply, that the simple fact of these episodic visions coming in at precisely the same point in the two series is enough to show that their introduction is not fortuitous but designed. Or to advert only to one other passage. The perplexity occasioned by the vision of chap. xii. 1-6 is well known. Nothing has seemed more imperatively to demand the admission that here at least the Apocalypse should be divided into two parts, the earlier relating to the fortunes of the Jewish, the later to those of the Gentile Church,<sup>2</sup> while those, as Vischer, who believe the vision to be Judaic, see in its present form distinct marks of a Judæo-Christian seer. But these difficulties again spring simply from interpretation. Let us refer the vision, as is generally done, to the historic birth of Christ, and they exist. Let us refer it to a more remote and comprehensive thought, and they disappear. The latter seems to be the correct view. The woman is neither the Jewish nor the Christian

<sup>1</sup> For example, Weizäcker, *Apost. Z.*, p. 507.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Lücke, *Versuch*, p. 882.

Church, nor the Virgin Mary. As enveloped in light, the light in contrast with the darkness, the light against which the darkness struggles but which it does not overcome,<sup>1</sup> she is an ideal figure. That the figure was afterwards realised mainly, but not of necessity solely, in the birth of our Lord and in His persecution as a child by Herod is true. That, however, is the actual event of which the picture as presented by the Apocalyptist is the ideal delineation.<sup>2</sup> We thus see without difficulty why this vision has its particular place assigned to it in the book. The Seals have been opened; the Trumpets have been brought to a close; we are on the verge of the Bowls, of the seven final and most disastrous plagues. The moment is thus far more critical than any that has gone before. The mystery of God's dealings with a sinful world and a degenerate Church is about to end. No place, therefore, could be found more suitable than the present for once more gathering together the main elements of the conflict and the main features of the result.

Our contention, therefore, is that where there is in a book distinct oneness of plan, there is also evidence of the operation of one mind; and that difficulties, occasioned

<sup>1</sup> Comp. John i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The interesting point here referred to is more fully discussed in the author's Commentary on the Apocalypse. Pfeleiderer, in his *Urchristenthum*, p. 331, adopts the same view of the ideal rather than actual character of this whole scene. It is difficult

indeed to understand how the passage should be so often supposed to refer to the historical birth of Christ (thus introducing great confusion into the articulation of the book) when we observe that the birth takes place in "heaven"—comp. chap. xi. 19; xii. 1.

by passages at first sight inconsistent with this, are removed by correct interpretation of the book.<sup>1</sup> Even Weizäcker,<sup>2</sup> who denies the unity of the Apocalypse, alleging that it is neither one great continuous picture nor a succession of pictures arising naturally out of one another, allows that it is an intricate (*verwickelte*) composition which, amidst all its digressions, holds fast an artificial thread, and partly by looking forward to what is to come, partly by looking back to what has been said, restores the broken connexion of its parts (*den Zusammenhang herstellt*).

The conclusion is obvious. As an organic whole it is much more natural to think that the Apocalypse proceeded from one mind than from many. No number of authors could have bound their different contributions into the unity and completeness which it displays.

5. There is sameness of style throughout the work. It is needless to say how large a part same-

<sup>1</sup> Zöckler adopts similar language in reference to the similar charge brought against the fourth book of Esdras. "For this artificial theory there is a total want of external testimony either direct or indirect, while the external indications in its favour are in part very weak. In support of the contention that the work is one (*aus einem Gusse*), we may appeal to the constant progression of its ideas, as well as to the manner in which the transition from one section to another is

effected, thus manifesting the singleness of plan, logically carried through, of an experienced apocalypticist, and not the laborious patchwork of a late redactor. We may therefore continue in the hitherto ruling belief that the whole is to be traced to a common origin" (p. 447). It is hardly necessary to say that this book is much more a collection of separable materials than the Apocalypse.

<sup>2</sup> *Apost. Z.* p. 506.

ness or diversity of style has played in arguments as to the unity of other books of the New Testament. The more marked the style, also, the greater the validity of the argument supplied by it. That drawn from the style of the Apocalypse is thus peculiarly cogent. With all its remarkable characteristics it is everywhere the same. This point, like the last, has been so largely treated of in the Lectures that the reader must be referred to them for its elucidation. For our present purpose it ought only to be carefully observed that uniformness of style is to be traced even in those parts which may to a large extent be separated from one another. The strangeness of the symbols, the use of the numbers 3, 4 and 7, even when the numbers may not be mentioned, and the irregularities of construction are as marked in chaps. i-iii. and in chap. xxii. 6-21, as they are in the central portion of the work. "On the one hand," says Simcox, "the work as we have it is the production of one writer; the peculiar style, language never wanting in vigour, subject to laws of its own, but those utterly different from the laws of ordinary Greek grammar, even in its most Hellenistic modification, are decisive proofs of this."<sup>1</sup> Nor is it in the least degree likely that an author, having before him certain Jewish, or Judæo-Christian Apocalypses, or both, and desiring to attach to them a preface and a conclusion, would deliberately consider their style in order that he might bring his own style into a closer corre-

<sup>1</sup> *Comm.* p. 156.

spondence with it. The literary habits of the age were too simple to permit such a notion to be entertained; and, if our re-worker of existing documents could display so much forethought and skill in one direction, we may well ask how it happens that he did not carry his revision farther, and obviate other difficulties by which later generations have been not less troubled. The surviving apocalyptic literature of the time, too, shows that the irregularities of which we have been speaking did not necessarily belong to the apocalyptic style.<sup>1</sup>

6. In certain parts of the work expressions occur which are only explained in other parts. That this is strikingly characteristic of the Apocalypse has been shown also in the Lectures, and the proof need not be repeated. It may only be observed here that the characteristic now alluded to marks all parts of the book,—not only the first three chapters in comparison with later ones, but these chapters in themselves. The different traits in the description of the Son of Man in chap. i. would be a far greater enigma than they are did we not see them separately in each of the seven epistles, and in their connexion with the condition of each of the seven churches. It is hardly possible not to agree with Lücke<sup>2</sup> when, in considering

<sup>1</sup> Vischer can only evade the force of this argument by supposing that the Apocalypse was originally written in Hebrew, and that it was translated into Greek by its Christian editor. This is again one of those gratuitous sup-

positions for which no proof of the slightest value can be alleged. It is hardly doubted by any inquirer that it was written in Greek. Could chap. xviii. have been a translation from the Hebrew?

<sup>2</sup> *Versuch*, p. 885.

this characteristic of the book, he urges that the reciprocal correspondence between its different parts is much more easily comprehended upon the theory of its original unity than upon the hypothesis that one part belongs to one date or author and another to another.

### III

Notwithstanding all that has been said, there may still be a disposition on the part of many to allege, with Pfleiderer,<sup>1</sup> that the difference between the introduction to, and the main body of, the Apocalypse is so great as to make it impossible to refer both these parts to the same authorship. Let us allow that the difference exists, and up to a certain point it is out of the question to deny it. Can any explanation be given of the transition made at chap. iv. 1 from the style of what precedes to the style of what follows? One or two considerations, in answering this question, ought to be kept in view.

(1) In what does unity of authorship consist? Is its existence to be allowed only when we are able to say that every sentence of a book proceeded directly from the same mind and pen? In that case we shall be compelled to admit that there is no unity of authorship in any one of our synoptic Gospels. Without touching the question whether or not we have these in their original form, it is impossible to imagine

<sup>1</sup> *u.s.* p. 321.



that, even in that form, they were three independent writings. They must have embodied materials common to those who moulded them into their present shape. Yet each is authenticated to us by the name it bears. Did St. Matthew, St. Mark, or St. Luke make use of longer or shorter documents already circulating in the Church? By doing so he stamped these with his authority. It is a matter of little moment to us whether or not he was the original writer. What he took into his Gospel he made his own, and he thus became responsible for its accuracy.

Precisely in the same way might we reason as to the Apocalypse. The author desires to unfold certain great principles which are to mark the history of the Church until the Second Coming of her Lord. He looks around him, and it is easy to imagine that he finds many documents dealing with this point—call them Apocalypses if you will. The fears and alarms, the hopes and expectations of the Church have been filling other hearts than his, and they have been uttered in that peculiar form of figurative language which, handed down from the Jewish Church when longing for its Messiah, had become consecrated to the anticipation of His advent. Would it be unnatural, or at variance with a genuine expression of his own thoughts, should he use such documents for his purpose? Will they be less his, when he has adopted them, than they would have been had every word of them been written by himself. He need not tell us what he is doing. He may employ no quotation marks. It was

not the manner of the age to do so. But he may see in the words of others the anticipations by which he himself is animated. What others have said may occupy his thoughts by day, his dreams by night, his seasons of calm meditation and poetic rapture. His visions, when he is "in Spirit,"<sup>1</sup> can thus hardly assume any other shape, and in that shape he transfers them to his own page. Let us suppose for an instant that some short Apocalypse hitherto undiscovered should come to light; and that, being Christian in its origin, it contained the vision of the latter half of chap. vii., or that of chap. xii. of our Apocalypse. Let us suppose the words to be precisely the same as we have them in St. John, what would be the inference? Simply this, that one whom we believe to have been an inspired prophet of God had set his seal upon certain utterances which, but for his voucher,

<sup>1</sup> May it not be questioned whether this expression "in Spirit" is not generally misunderstood? What right have we to understand by it only what we describe as "visions," where reason and reflection are supposed to disappear, and to be replaced by something approaching at least to the unchecked and often fantastic impressions of a dream? What right has Weizäcker, *e.g.* to contrast what he finds in the Apocalypse, *überall Reflexion und Kunst*, with what he thinks he ought to find, *die Art unmittelbarer geistiger Hervorbringung in Schauen und Ahnen* (*Apost. Z.*

p. 506). "Spirit" is simply the power of the Divine Spirit in man, the power by which Apostles preached, as well as prophets spoke, and is perfectly consistent with reflection, with art in its highest sense, and with consciousness of what one is saying or doing. We do great injustice to the Apocalypse when we separate these things from it because it was beheld "in Spirit," or even when we think with Simcox that we have a parallel phenomenon in "dreams, trances, or delirium." Simcox in *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. v. p. 431.

we might have regarded as only human. Or, let us even further suppose that the Apocalypse thus discovered were Jewish not Christian, yet obviously the groundwork of what we now have, needing only some slight modifications in order to be perfectly adapted to the purpose of our Seer. Why may he not use it? Little modification might be needed. In this way an old Apocalypse might become part of a new one, and yet unity of authorship, in any sense worthy of the name, might be preserved in the later document.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Any such supposition is, however, rendered wholly unnecessary if we recall what was said in the previous discussion in regard to the prevalence of the apocalyptic style at the time, whether early or late, at which our Apocalypse was written. Steeped in the spirit of his day, the writer naturally adopted its method of expressing himself whenever he came to that part of his book at which his revelation was to be made. He did not adopt that method in chaps. ii. and iii. because he was then describing the persons to whom he was about to speak. His real speaking, what he designed to be its substance, had not begun. Nor could he indeed have described them in the figurative language of his later chapters, for such language would then have been inappropriate and

<sup>1</sup> The above is indeed the principle upon which Weizäcker contends that the Apocalypse has been constructed, the author "making use of materials of a

similar kind which he had at his command, and combining them into a whole." *Comp. Ap. Zeitalter*, p. 509.

unintelligible. He used, therefore, there another style inherent in the nature of his object; and yet even there the same artificial arrangement of his thoughts, even the same figures,—as those of Paradise, of the Tree of Life, of the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven,—reveal to us the general mould in which the remainder of the book is cast.

These considerations also explain to us the words, “Straightway I was in Spirit” of chap. iv. 2, which are so often adduced as a proof that we have here a different writer from the one who meets us at chap. i. 10, “I was in Spirit on the Lord’s Day.” So far from leading to this, they lead to the very opposite conclusion,—that the writer is most probably the same. They are the taking up again of that thread of discourse from which he had diverged for a little in order to describe those for whom that revelation was intended which from the moment when he seized his pen had been in his mind.<sup>1</sup> First of all he tells us that he was “in Spirit on the Lord’s day”; then he pauses to depict the circumstances under which he writes; lastly, having done this, he returns at chap. iv. 2 (chap. iv. 1 being still only preparatory, the door “opened” and “I will show”) to the revelations rising upon his vision at chap. i. 10. There is no shadow of probability in saying that chap. i. 10 is taken from chap. iv. 2, the latter having the priority. The priority belongs to the former, the latter being obviously that *resumption* of thought so common in

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 1-3, 11.

every writer who has turned aside for a moment from his main topic.<sup>1</sup>

(3) There is thus no special difficulty with the transition in style from chaps. ii. and iii. to chap. iv., and the different considerations adduced in this discussion relative to the general question may be left to produce their own effect upon the reader.

As every attempt made in the past to shake the Unity of the Apocalypse has been unsuccessful, it is probable that the same fate will attend every similar attempt in future. So peculiar are the characteristics of the book that greater difficulties could not fail to be experienced in intercalating forged passages into it than into any other book of the New Testament. Its method, style, figures, and language are all so remote from those of an ordinary writer that it would be almost impossible to find in different ages men who, without betraying themselves, could insert into it portions of their own composition. On the other hand, take away any part of it, and that harmony of its proportions to which the writer evidently attached so much importance is at once destroyed.

The length to which this discussion has extended demands an apology. But no inquiry connected with the book before us has more important ramifications into every question raised by it. If the book is really a unity the fact goes far to determine every other

<sup>1</sup> Holtzmann may be justly claimed in favour of this interpretation, whether in harmony with his general views or not, when

he says, commenting on *ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι* in chap. iv. 2, "insofern Steigerung von i. 10."—*Hand-Commentar*, 1891.

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inquiry regarding it in which the Church is interested. We may close with the words of Beyschlag who, after summarising the leading thoughts of the Apocalypse, says, "Let us look at its whole structure and order of thought, and its magnificent compactness will put to shame every poor modern attempt to resolve this work of earliest Christian Art into a compound of shreds and patches."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *St. u. Kr.* 1888, p. 132.

## DISCUSSION III

### THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE

IN the Lectures on the Apocalypse contained in our previous volume it has been taken for granted that the composition of that book is to be assigned to a date subsequent, and not prior, to the destruction of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70. So far, however, is this from being generally conceded, that the very reverse is the case. Recent scholarship has, with little exception, decided in favour of the earlier and not the later date. It is impossible, therefore, to dispense with an attempt to defend the position which has been assumed. Apart from this, too, the inquiry possesses so much interest and importance that no layman even, desirous to understand the book with which we are concerned, should pass it by. We shall endeavour, while not omitting any important argument, to make the matter intelligible to every reader.

For all practical purposes the inquiry really is, Whether the Apocalypse was written about A.D. 68, before the fall of Jerusalem, or about A.D. 95 or 96, towards the close of the reign of the Emperor Domitian? Züllig has indeed placed it so early as

A.D. 44 to A.D. 47, under Claudius, who reigned from A.D. 41 to A.D. 54; and others, among whom may be named Grotius and Hammond, have assigned it to the same reign, though not necessarily to so early a part of it. On the other hand, the writer of a tract on "The life and death of the apostles and disciples of our Lord" supposed, but falsely, to have been Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre, at the close of the third century, speaks of the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98 to A.D. 117, as the time when the Apocalypse was produced. The first of these dates is so universally allowed to be too early, the second too late, that it is unnecessary to discuss them. At the one end of the scale we are limited to a date immediately preceding A.D. 70. At the other the evidence affords no resting-place till we reach the late date in the first century already mentioned (A.D. 95 or 96). Between these two the question lies. The evidence is both external and internal, and it will be well to take its two branches in their usual order.

I. *External Evidence.*—The first witness who claims our attention is undoubtedly Irenæus, appointed Bishop of Lyons, A.D. 177, in succession to Pothinus, whose age, ninety years, takes us back to the generation that saw the last of the Apostles, and with whom Irenæus, as one of his Presbyters, can scarcely have failed to have had familiar intercourse. The words of Irenæus have been preserved by Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> "for no long time ago was it (the Revelation) seen (*οὐδὲ γὰρ*

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.* v. 8.



πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐώραθη), but almost in our generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian." An effort has no doubt been made to evade the force of the conclusion to which these words lead, by suggesting that the subject of the verb ἐώραθη in the sentence quoted is not "the Revelation" but St. John himself—not "it" was seen but "he" was seen. Argument against such a supposition may be dispensed with. Although supported by an able writer (generally supposed to be Dr. Goodwin) on the Apocalypse in the *Biblical Review*,<sup>1</sup> and by Dr. Macdonald in his *Life and Writings of St. John*,<sup>2</sup> no Greek scholar would for a moment endeavour to defend it. Weiss<sup>3</sup> has indeed recently advanced another proposal for getting rid of the testimony of Irenæus. Proceeding upon the supposition that the beast of chap. xvii. 11, who is the eighth and of the seven, is Domitian, he concludes that Irenæus, believing St. John to be a prophet, could entertain no other idea but that an Apocalypse so associated with the terrors of that reign must have been written at the time. This is, however, inconsistent with the conclusion to which the belief of Irenæus in the prophetic character of St. John would have naturally led him. The apostle, he thought, was a true prophet of God. Why then should he have waited till the end of Domitian's reign, for it is of "the end of the reign" that Irenæus speaks, before he beheld his visions and uttered his prophecy? Would he not have more clearly revealed his prophetic

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Einführung*, p. 385.

character had he both seen and spoken at an earlier date? The supposition of Weiss, so far from accounting for the mistake thought to have been committed by Irenæus, is the very thing that would have led that Father to an entirely different conclusion had the circumstances of the case not been too strong for him. The testimony of Irenæus is therefore clear. The meaning of his statement is indisputable; and we must either accept it or allow (what may certainly have happened) that he was mistaken. Yet he was not likely to be mistaken, and several considerations add weight to the witness that he bears with so much precision.

The following may be mentioned: (1) His nearness to the apostolic age; for he cannot have been born later than A.D. 130,<sup>1</sup> while many have contended that his birth should be placed at least twenty or twenty-five years earlier in the century. (2) The well-known fact that he had been a disciple and friend of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had been a contemporary of the apostle John himself, who had held intercourse with him and who was wont to relate in the circle of his friends incidents out of that deeply-interesting past. In this respect Irenæus's own letter to Florinus,<sup>2</sup> in which he details the nature of his intercourse with Polycarp, will always remain one of the most precious monuments of Christian antiquity, showing as it does in the clearest manner the spirit of inquiry, the intelligence, the vivacity, and the effort to

<sup>1</sup> *Dict. of Christian Biography*, IRENÆUS.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 169.

form distinct conceptions of times anterior to their own, by which these old Fathers of the Church were marked. (3) The object which Irenæus had in view in making the statement now commented on. He had been discussing the number of the beast as given in Rev. xiii. 18, and he goes on to explain that it was only at some risk that any one could endeavour to interpret it; for, had the Apostle desired "the present time" to know the interpretation, he could himself have given it, inasmuch as the vision had been granted him on the very borders of the generation to which Irenæus spoke. The date of the book was thus no trifling matter in the eyes of this Father, for it powerfully affected the relation in which he stood to one of the most difficult mysteries of the Apocalypse. (4) The confidence of Eusebius in the statement made by him. This confidence, it will not be denied, appears in all that Eusebius has said upon the point; and no one could have known better than he any counter-opinions which are supposed to have existed long before his day, and to have formed another and wholly different current of tradition.

It is unnecessary to say more. There need be no hesitation in asserting that in regard to few facts of early Christian antiquity have we a statement more positively or clearly given than that of Irenæus, that the Seer beheld the visions of his book at the end of Domitian's reign, that is, about A.D. 96.

We turn next to the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, who flourished towards the close of the

second and in the early part of the third century.<sup>1</sup> For this we are again indebted to Eusebius, who quotes from Clement the beautiful story of the young robber, in order to prove that, after the death of Domitian (μετὰ τὴν Δομετιανοῦ τελευτήν), the Apostle John returned from his exile in Patmos to Ephesus, and presided over the churches there.<sup>2</sup> It is true that, in his account of the story, Clement does not name Domitian, saying merely that John had returned "after the death of the tyrant" (τοῦ τυράννου τελευτήσαντος). But no one can read Eusebius without seeing that he at least distinctly understood Clement to mean that John had been banished to Patmos by Domitian, and that, at a period subsequent to that Emperor's death, he had presided over the Church in the neighbourhood of Ephesus. Nor is there any force in the objection that, if so, the Apostle must have lived into the second century, because the incidents of the story, beginning only about A.D. 95, would require some years for their complete development. Nothing is told that might not have happened in the course of a single year; while, if we suppose, and it is the only other possible supposition, that St. John's return took place after the death of Nero, when he was in all probability not more than sixty years of age, and when he may have been in reality nearly ten years less, many expressions of the narrative of Clement, such as "forgetful of his age," and "thy aged father," lose their force, and *the whole object of its*

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 165 to A. D. 220.

<sup>2</sup> *H. E.* iii. 23.

*quotation by Eusebius is destroyed.* At the close of the second century, therefore, the impression certainly prevailed in Alexandria that St. John's banishment to Patmos had taken place under Domitian, and that before that date the Book of Revelation could not have been penned.

The evidence of Tertullian, but little later than that of Clement, for he died A.D. 240, may appropriately follow. His own words indeed will hardly justify any positive conclusion upon the point, for, after having spoken of Nero as the first persecutor of the Christians, he merely adds, "Domitian, too, a man of Nero's type (*portio Neronis*) in cruelty, tried his hand at persecution; but, as he had something of the human in him, he soon put an end to what he had begun, even restoring again those whom he had banished."<sup>1</sup> But Eusebius notices the passage in such a manner as to show that he believed St. John to be included among those to whom Tertullian refers.<sup>2</sup>

Passing to another region of the Church, we are met by the testimony of Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau in Pannonia, who was martyred under Diocletian, A.D. 303. So far as is known he is the earliest commentator on the Apocalypse; and it is natural to think that, as a commentator, he would take a greater than ordinary interest in such a question as is now before us. His testimony is of the most specific kind, for, commenting on chap. x. 11, he says that "when John said these things he was in the island of Patmos,

<sup>1</sup> *Tertullian*, in Clark's "Library," i. p. 64.    <sup>2</sup> *H. E.* iii. 20.

condemned to the labour of the mines by Cæsar Domitian. There, therefore, he saw the Apocalypse.”<sup>1</sup>

In still another quarter we meet Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea (A.D. 260 to A.D. 339), a man whose inquiring spirit led him to search out, and to preserve in his writings, many ancient documents of incalculable value to the student of early Christian antiquity. Of his opinion there can be no doubt. We have already found him citing Irenæus and Clement as authorities in favour of everything in connexion with this matter for which we need to contend; and, in his own historical account of the fourteenth year of Domitian’s reign, he says of the Apostle John that “he was banished” at that time “to Patmos, where he saw the Apocalypse, as Irenæus shows.”<sup>2</sup> Nor is there any ground for the assertion that Eusebius simply repeated what Irenæus had said more than a century before. That he relied greatly upon Irenæus is unquestionable. His very object was to collect and preserve the testimonies which seemed to him to warrant a definite conclusion. But he did not depend upon Irenæus alone. Referring to the point before us, he in one place names also Clement of Alexandria as his authority,<sup>3</sup> and in another the “tradition of the ancients.”<sup>4</sup>

This list of witnesses may be fitly closed with Jerome, who died A.D. 420, the most learned of all the

<sup>1</sup> *Tertullian*, in Clark’s ‘Library,’ iii. p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> *Chron.* cap. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> *H. E.* iii. 23.

<sup>4</sup> ὁ τῶν παρ’ ἡμῶν ἀρχαίων παραδίδωσι λόγος, *H. E.* iii. 20.

Fathers except Origen, and one who, as is well known, devoted himself to the study of Scripture with a zeal not even surpassed by that of his illustrious predecessor in the same field. Speaking of St. John in his *Treatise on Illustrious Men*, he says of him that, "having been banished in the fourteenth year of Domitian to the island of Patmos, he wrote the Apocalypse." <sup>1</sup>

Testimonies subsequent to these, however clear, hardly possess so much authority as to entitle them to quotation.

Looking back upon what has been said we have the following result. From the first witness who speaks upon the point in the latter half of the second century down to the first half of the fifth we have a succession of Fathers bearing testimony with one accord, and in language which admits of no misunderstanding, to the fact that St. John was banished to Patmos under the reign of Domitian, and that there he beheld those visions of the Apocalypse which he afterwards committed to writing. These Fathers, too, are men who in their interest in the subject immediately in hand (to say nothing of other subjects), in ability, learning, and critical insight into the history of bygone times, surpass all the Fathers, except one to be afterwards mentioned, of their respective eras. In their spheres of labour, if not by birth, they belong to the most different and widespread regions of the Church—to Gaul, Alexandria, the pro-consular

<sup>1</sup> Cap. 9.

province of North Africa, Pannonia, Syria, and Rome. They are thus in a great degree independent of each other, and they convey to us the incontestible impression that, for at least the first four centuries of the Christian era and over the whole extent of the Christian Church, it was firmly believed that St. John had beheld the visions of the Apocalypse in the days of Domitian and not of Nero.<sup>1</sup>

More, however, has to be said, for various considerations of an external rather than an internal kind are favourable to this conclusion. Thus the persecution under Domitian appears to have been much more widespread than that under Nero, by whom St. John must have been banished if the earlier date of the Apocalypse be correct. The almost unanimous voice of the modern inquiry favours the supposition that the Neronian persecution, though it may have provoked echoes in some of the provinces, did not extend beyond the city of Rome.<sup>2</sup> It was otherwise with Domitian, for, even although the persecution by that Emperor can hardly be spoken of as general, it certainly included inquiries made with

<sup>1</sup> A fact mentioned by Lücke (*Versuch*, p. 822) is also not without importance here. That writer tells us that the martyrologies and menologies after Andreas place the martyrdom of Antipas (Rev. ii. 13) in the time of Domitian, "because the Apocalypse appeared to them to have been written at that time." The belief illustrates

the continuous nature of the current tradition.

<sup>2</sup> Gieseler, i. p. 82, who completely adopts the conclusions of Dodwell in his reasoning against Orosius; Keim, *Rom und das Christenthum*, p. 193; Aubé, *Histoire*, p. 109; Overbeck, *Studien*, p. 97. Lücke (*Versuch*, p. 437) admits the limitation.



regard to descendants in Palestine of the house of David,<sup>1</sup> and it may well have touched places intermediate between Palestine and Rome. Again, there is the clearest evidence even in the words of Tacitus,<sup>2</sup> confirmed by all the other testimony which has come down to us, that the persecution under Nero had no relation whatever to the religious opinions of its victims, or to the interests of the State. It was a mere outburst of the tyrant's rage, and of his effort to avert from himself the indignation of the people at the horrible crime of which he was the reputed author.<sup>3</sup> Domitian, as we have already seen, had much more of an eye to religious considerations, and Christians in his time were much more numerous.<sup>4</sup> The words of Rev. i. 9 have no relation to the former, and are at least much more suitable to the latter, state of things. Again, if importance is to be attached to the fact that the Apocalypse bears the marks of *immediately* surrounding persecution, these will be found more readily at the later than at the earlier date. It was in the last year of his reign that Domitian became a persecutor, and in the same year the apocalyptic visions were seen. On the other hand, several years of rest to the Christians elapsed between the date of the Neronic persecution and the reign of either Galba or Vespasian; for the city of Rome was fired in July 64; the persecution broke out in the

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.* iii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Annal.* xv. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. Keim, *u. s.* p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Keim, *u. s.* p. 210, whose words are *Die verfolgten sind also Christen.*

following September; and the idea entertained by some that Nero's persecutions continued at intervals till his death in A.D. 68 is not only destitute of proof, but has been pronounced by Keim to be "fully unhistorical."<sup>1</sup> Once more, there appears to be no mention, in any ancient writer, of exile as a means of punishment resorted to by Nero. We read of imprisonment, confiscation, hunting to death with dogs, crucifixion, beheading, drenching with oil and then setting fire to the miserable victim: banishment is never named. In the case of Domitian we have not only Eusebius reporting from "the historians of the day," and expressly from Tertullian, a decree of the Roman Senate recalling those whom Domitian had unjustly expelled,<sup>2</sup> but we have the detailed story of Domitilla (whether there were not two of that name who experienced a similar fate it is needless to inquire), the wife of Flavius Clemens, Domitian's own cousin, whom that Emperor banished to Pandataria near Naples.<sup>3</sup> In this instance also the charge against the accused was of a religious kind, that of atheism or Judaising, and such continued to be the character of Domitian's persecutions to the end of his reign.<sup>4</sup>

These considerations powerfully confirm the probability that the tradition of the early Church, connecting the composition of the Apocalypse with the

<sup>1</sup> *u.s.* p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> *H. E.* iii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Dom.* c. 18; Dio Cassius, lxxvii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Keim, *u.s.* p. 213.

reign of Domitian rather than of Galba or Vespasian, is correct.

It has indeed been urged that the voice of antiquity is not so distinctly in favour of an early date as might be supposed from the above remarks; and different testimonies have been appealed to which are thought to lead to an opposite conclusion. Of these the earliest is from the Muratorian fragment, ascribed by Bunsen to Hegesippus, A.D. 170. The words of the fragment are, "The blessed Paul himself, following the order of his predecessor (*prodecessoris sui*) John, writes to seven churches only by name"; and the argument is, that the Apocalypse is here stated "to have preceded the death of St. Paul, who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Nero."<sup>1</sup> If this, however, be the meaning, the Apocalypse must have preceded not only the death of St. Paul, but the writing of at least the last of his Seven Epistles to the churches; that is, it must have preceded the year A.D. 62, a conclusion fatal to the idea of St. John's banishment by Nero, the persecution of that Emperor having begun in A.D. 64. But it is not necessary to say this. The obvious meaning of the word "*prodecessor*" is that St. John had been called to the apostleship earlier than St. Paul (comp. Gal. i. 17, "them which were apostles before me"). Nor does the word "following" necessarily involve the idea that St. Paul had St. John's "order" before him when he wrote. It may mean no more than that the writer of the fragment, passing in

<sup>1</sup> *Bibl. Rev.* i. 172.

his statement from the Gospels to the Epistles, and thus *from* St. John *to* St. Paul, was struck with the fact that the latter had written only seven Epistles; and that, as the earlier Apostle had done the same, he spoke of the one as following the example of the other.<sup>1</sup>

Origen, too (A.D. 186 to A.D. 253), has been cited as in favour of the early date of the Apocalypse, but his words contain no definite information of the kind. In his commentary on St. Matthew he tells us that John was condemned to Patmos by "the King of the Romans," adding that the Apostle had not mentioned in Rev. i. 9 by whom he was condemned.<sup>2</sup> He may, therefore, not have known whether the "king" in question was Nero or Domitian; or, even if he knew, he may have said nothing upon the point, because he thought it proper to follow the example of St. John himself, whose silence, as we may infer from his use of  $\mu\eta$ , he regarded as intentional.

Thus far the evidence adduced on behalf of the composition of the Apocalypse before the fall of Jerusalem may without impropriety be spoken of as unworthy of regard. It is somewhat different when we come to Epiphanius, appointed Bishop of Salamis A.D. 367, and one of the most voluminous writers of

<sup>1</sup> Tregelles (*Can. Mur.* p. 43) says, "It cannot be that the author thought that St. John saw and wrote the Apocalypse before St. Paul had written his Epistles," and he adds his own explanation, "John had been previously spoken

of by the writer as the author of the Gospel and his first Epistle." Lücke (*Versuch*, p. 809) has no hesitation in adopting the explanation given above.

<sup>2</sup>  $\mu\eta$  λέγων τίς αὐτὸν κατεδίκασε.

his age. Lücke, anxious as he is to find proof of the earlier date, speaks of him as the first to interrupt the Irenæan tradition.<sup>1</sup> What does the interruption amount to? Epiphanius has spoken upon the point in two passages. In the first<sup>2</sup> he says that John, though he shrank from the task, was constrained by the Holy Spirit to write a Gospel "in his old age, when he had spent ninety years of life, after his return from Patmos, which took place in the reign of the Emperor Claudius."<sup>3</sup> In the second<sup>4</sup> he speaks of the Apostle as having prophesied in the time of the Emperor Claudius, when he went to the island of Patmos. The impossibility of receiving these statements must be at once apparent. The Emperor Claudius died A.D. 54, so that we have the incredible assertions that St. John was even then ninety years old, and that he wrote his Gospel at that time. Besides this, it is to be observed that Claudius did not persecute the Christians generally, though they may be included among "the Jews" whom he banished from Rome.<sup>5</sup> The universal voice of early Christian antiquity is that Nero was the *first* persecutor, Domitian the second.<sup>6</sup> How Epiphanius was led into his mistake, whether by that general inaccuracy and want of critical acumen for which he is noted,<sup>7</sup> or by some misapprehension

<sup>1</sup> *Versuch*, p. 806.

<sup>2</sup> li. c. 12.

<sup>3</sup> See in Lee's *Prolegomena*, p. 419.

<sup>4</sup> c. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xviii. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Comp. among many others Tertullian, *Apol.* p. 5; also the strong statement of Stuart upon this point, *Comm.* p. 226.

<sup>7</sup> Comp. *Dict. of Christian Biogr.*, EPIPHANIUS.

connected with the words of Acts xviii. 2, it is impossible to say; but that there is error either on his part or on the part of those who copied him there can hardly be a moment's doubt. This is rendered the more probable by the singular fact that the story of Epiphanius appears never to have made the slightest impression upon those who came after him. No tradition in that form exists; the statement seems to have been forgotten until revived by Grotius and Hammond; and it now stands in the pages of its author, a striking instance of the perplexity which one single inaccuracy may introduce into our efforts to reconstruct the past.

In addition to Epiphanius one or two other authorities from the first Christian centuries are quoted on behalf of an early date for the Apocalypse. Thus a statement to that effect is contained in the superscription of a Syriac version of the Revelation, first published A.D. 1627, and belonging, as seems to be generally allowed, to the sixth century. The superscription bears that the Revelation was "given by God to the Evangelist John on the island of Patmos, to which he had been sent by the Emperor Nero." Even allowing to this statement the full weight which it is supposed to possess, and giving no heed to the conjecture that by Nero is meant Domitian, who was known as a second Nero,<sup>1</sup> the singular point to be noticed is that here, *for the first time*, we have the banishment of St. John assigned to

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Elliott, *H. A.* i. p. 43.

Nero. An allegation of this kind so late as the sixth century is of little moment. Andreas, Archbishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, about the beginning of the sixth century, in his commentary upon Rev. vi. 12, tells us that "there are not wanting some" who apply the mention made of the "great earthquake" there to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, from which the inference is drawn that those who did so must have believed that the Apocalypse was written before that event. Even if they did, it by no means follows that they rested upon any tradition to that effect. Their idea of the date of composition may have sprung from their interpretation of the text, and not their interpretation from any historical information at their command. Andreas himself decidedly rejects the interpretation, but says nothing of the question of date. Andreas was succeeded, how long afterwards is disputed, in the same See by Arethas, but the commentary of the latter on the Apocalypse, in which he simply followed Andreas, and which is also referred to in this controversy, leads to the same conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The writer may be permitted to express his own conviction, although he ventures to do it only in a note, that the words of Andreas have been misunderstood. Referring to those who are spoken of as applying the words of the Seer to the destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasian, Lücke (*Versuch*, p. 810) says, "These persons therefore took for granted a banishment of St. John to Patmos before

that date." When we look at Andreas's own commentary this inference of Lücke's seems to be by no means justified. The words of Andreas (chap. vii. 1) are, *Etsi isthæc ad illa incommoda a quibusdam referantur quæ Judæi quondam a Romanis perpassi sunt; arbitrantur enim per quatuor mystica animalia, etc.; multo tamen rectius ad antichristi adventum locus hic refertur.* What Andreas contrasts

Finally, Theophylact is mentioned, who says in his preface to his commentary on the Gospel of St. John that that Apostle was "an exile in the island of Patmos thirty-two years after the ascension of Christ." But the curious thing is that Theophylact makes this statement in connexion with the writing not of the Apocalypse but of the fourth Gospel, and in that respect at least no one doubts that he is wrong. Apart from this, the late period, the eleventh century, in which he flourished, deprives his evidence of weight as to that earlier tradition of the Church of which we are in quest.

Glancing for a moment over the external evidence as a whole it is clear that Lücke, notwithstanding his own conclusion in favour of the earlier date, only states the matter with his usual fairness when he says that "the oldest and most wide tradition is certainly (*allerdings*) that which proceeds from Irenæus, according to which the Apostle John beheld and wrote the Apocalypse towards the end of the reign of

in these words is not an opinion of some that, in Rev. vi. 12, etc., we have a prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem, and an opinion of others that the words relate to the coming of Antichrist. He rather contrasts the latter with the idea entertained by some, that St. John in the verses spoken of must have *drawn his description from what he knew of the fate of the holy city*. The reference to others, in this respect corresponding to every passage of his own

commentary bearing upon the point, thus implies on the part of the *quidam* the belief that Jerusalem had fallen when the Apocalypse was written. These persons are thus witnesses for the *later* not the *earlier* date. Arethas (on Rev. i. 9) is still more precise than Andreas, for he tells his readers on the authority of Eusebius, but in such a way as to show his own belief in the statement, that John had been banished to Patmos by Domitian.



Domitian.”<sup>1</sup> It is unfair to say with Stuart<sup>2</sup> that “ancient testimony is divided mainly between the time of Domitian and that of Nero,” or with Davidson<sup>3</sup> that there is an “absence of external evidence,” or with the writer in the *Biblical Review*<sup>4</sup> that the “evidence is rather in favour of the early date than against it.” So far as it goes the external evidence is, on the contrary, both clear and definite. It begins no doubt with Irenæus, and with some one it must begin. But Irenæus makes his statement in such a way as to show that he gives in it the opinion of the Church, and for more than three centuries there is no disturbing voice except that of Epiphanius, of whose story of the relation of St. John to the Emperor Claudius no one will venture to say more than is said by Stuart at the moment when he quotes him to show “that the voice of antiquity is not unanimous on the subject,”—“This opinion of Epiphanius stands alone among the ancients. . . . We must dismiss this matter, therefore, merely with the remark that no good grounds of it are given, nor can any be well imagined.”<sup>5</sup>

If any other conclusion than that which asserts the late date of the Apocalypse is to be adopted, it must rest upon overpowering evidence supplied by its own contents.

II. *Internal Evidence.*—Such evidence is supposed

<sup>1</sup> *Versuch*, p. 811.

<sup>2</sup> *Comm.* p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> *Intr.* i. p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> *i.* p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> *Comm.* p. 218.

to exist, many modern scholars, not more distinguished by their ability than by their sobriety and reverence of spirit, even accepting it as decisive. The evidence relied on may be said to divide itself into two branches: first, the interpretation of particular texts; secondly, the general character of the contents and style of the book.

1. *The interpretation of particular texts.*—It is urged by Hilgenfeld that passages such as chaps. vi. 9-11; xvi. 6; xvii. 6; xviii. 24; xix. 2, refer to the persecution of the Christians by Nero;<sup>1</sup> while Bleek<sup>2</sup> depends mainly upon the first of these passages for the same conclusion as at least the “most probable.” But, properly interpreted, Rev. vi. 9-11 has no reference to any persecution of Christians. These souls under the altar are the souls not of Christian martyrs but of *Old Testament saints*, who had been waiting for that perfection which was to be brought to them by the coming of Christ.<sup>3</sup> A moment’s attention, again, to the other texts quoted is sufficient to show that they are equally applicable to any persecution of Christians whatever, and that there is absolutely nothing to connect them with Nero rather than Domitian. On the contrary, if we believe, as there seems every reason to do, that persecution under the latter emperor was more severe and widespread than under the former, we shall, by referring these texts to persecutions under him rather than Nero, be better able to explain the strong expres-

<sup>1</sup> *Eint.* p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> See this point fully discussed in *Comm.*, *in loc.*

sions which direct our thoughts not only to Babylon (supposing for the moment Babylon to be Rome), but to the whole earth.<sup>1</sup>

Chap. xi. 1, 2 is referred to with great confidence in this connexion.<sup>2</sup> The passage relates to the measuring of the temple (*ναός*) and the treading of the holy city under foot by the nations; and it is supposed to prove partly, that the temple must still have been in existence when the words were written; partly, that the Jewish war, which began A.D. 66, must then have been in progress, inasmuch as the writer expects that Jerusalem and the outer court of the temple will be destroyed by the heathen. The following considerations may be noted in reply. (1) As the act of "measuring" relates, and is admitted by almost all interpreters to relate, to the *preservation*, not to the *destruction*, of the "temple," that is, of the inner sanctuary, it will follow that, on the application of his words now spoken of, the expectations of the Seer were falsified by the event. That inner sanctuary was the very part of the temple buildings into which the Roman soldiers pressed with peculiar zeal, and which they utterly consumed with fire.<sup>3</sup> A similar remark applies to the treading of the holy city under foot of the nations for three and a half years. If, as is sometimes done, this period is fixed between February of A.D. 67, when Vespasian received his

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. xviii. 24; xix. 2.

52; Weiss, *Einleitung*, p. 383;

<sup>2</sup> Lücke, *Versuch*, p. 825;

*Parousia*, p. 373; and many others.

Bleek, *Lectures*, p. 248; Stuart.

*Comm.* p. 226; Düsterdieck, p.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War*, vi. 4, 5.

commission from Nero, and August of A.D. 70, when the city fell, it is sufficient to point to the obvious meaning of the text, that the treading should only begin after and not before Jerusalem was taken. Or if, to escape this difficulty, the three and a half years are placed after the city's fall, there is no historical event corresponding to the cessation of the treading at their close. Besides this, the events detailed from verse 3 to verse 13, which obviously belong to the three and a half years, cannot, if we interpret literally, have occurred at a time when the foot of foreign oppression was trampling the city in the dust; while, at the same time, it will be impossible to explain various indications given in these verses that the events referred to took place, not within the limited area of Jerusalem, but on the wide area of the world.

(2) As it is obvious that, on the above supposition, the writer, deceived in his expectations, was not inspired, we are entitled to ask as to the grounds upon which, at the very outbreak of the Jewish war, he could either anticipate the destruction of the greater part of the sacred building, or could distinguish, as upon a correct interpretation he so does, between the preservation of the inner sanctuary and altar upon the one hand, and the casting out of the outer court upon the other. In no case could he have done either. Was he, as so often supposed, a fanatical Jewish Christian, who was giving utterance only to his own expectations, he could have entertained but one idea, that the Almighty would yet, as He had

often done before, interfere on behalf of His ancient people, and guard the Zion which He loved. Or if, as is rendered probable by a comparison of Rev. xi. 2 with Luke xxi. 24, he proceeded upon the prophecy of Christ, how could he shut his eyes to the fact that, at a moment when all the buildings of the temple were before Him,<sup>1</sup> and when from the Mount of Olives His eye would peculiarly rest upon the loftiest part,—the inner shrine,—our Lord had said, “The days will come in which there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.”<sup>2</sup> The words of chap. xi. 1, 2 cannot be understood literally without raising both historical and dogmatical difficulties which it is impossible to overcome.<sup>3</sup> (3) Not less formidable are the exegetical difficulties of this interpretation; for even those who understand the temple, the altar, the outer court, and the city literally, are compelled to acknowledge that other parts of the same passage, the measuring reed and the measuring, the two olive trees,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxi. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Weiss (*Einleitung*, p. 383), who adopts the idea that the material temple is proved by the general description to have been still standing, is constrained to say (in the light of Mark xiii. 2), that the idea of a partial preservation of the temple is *völlig undenkbar*. He accordingly understands the *naos*, the first part spoken of, to be “believing Israel,” and the “court,” the second part, to be “unbelieving Israel.” Of this view it need only

be said, that it falls under the same condemnation of allegorising with which Weiss visits those who think of the temple as a figure for the Christian Church. Does Weiss mean to say that in chap. xii. 6, 14, to which he refers, only Jewish Christians are included? It is thus impossible to see why, on his interpretation, any more than on the wider one which thinks of the Church in general, we must allow that the material temple had not been destroyed. The whole description is clearly figurative.

the two candlesticks, and the beast, must be understood symbolically. A line of distinction thus arbitrarily drawn between what is literal and what is symbolical leaves it in the power of an interpreter to make anything that he pleases of the words before him. (4) The whole style of the book requires us to interpret the passage symbolically. In the vision of Ezekiel,<sup>1</sup> upon which the delineation rests, the "measuring" of the prophet is undeniably symbolical. How natural was it that, with such a prophecy in his eye, St. John should adopt symbolism of the same kind. His own words, too, bear testimony to the fact. The witnesses are described by him as "the two candlesticks" (verse 4), and he had himself explained his use of that term in chap. i. 20, "the seven candlesticks are seven churches." Nowhere indeed throughout the book do we find descriptions drawn from the institutions or rites of Israel employed in a literal sense. Even the mention in verse 8 of this chapter of "the great city where also their Lord was crucified," so confidently appealed to by Lücke,<sup>2</sup> is not strictly literal. It may be more so than is allowed by Hengstenberg, against whose argument Lücke's may have force; but it is not, properly speaking, the mere historical Jerusalem that is mentioned. It is Jerusalem *under one of its aspects*, the guilty degenerate city of "the Jews."<sup>3</sup> (5) Lastly, the 19th verse of the chapter distinctly shows us that the Seer has in his eye, as at least the deepest foundation of his symbolism, not

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xl. 3, etc.    <sup>2</sup> *Versuch*, p. 828.    <sup>3</sup> *Comp. Lect.*, v. p. 182.

the Herodian temple at all, but the tabernacle in the wilderness; for he there tells us that when the "temple" of God that is in heaven was opened, "there was seen in the temple the ark of His covenant." In the Herodian temple the ark could not have been seen, for it had disappeared at the destruction of the first temple, long before the days of St. John. No doubt the temple spoken of in chap. xi. 19 was "in heaven," but to the Seer things in heaven were the type and pattern of heavenly things on earth; and throughout the Apocalypse the saints dwell not on earth but in heaven. The imagery of verse 19, where the heavenly sanctuary (*ναός*) is mentioned, being thus drawn from the tabernacle, the sanctuary (*ναός*) of verse 1 must be suggested from the same source. It is true that the Seer immediately passes to the "holy city,"<sup>1</sup> not the "camp" of Israel. He could not do otherwise. The antitype of the "camp" was not the "holy city," but the "beloved city,"<sup>2</sup>—was Jerusalem under an aspect altogether different from that in which it is here contemplated. It may be asserted with the utmost confidence that chap. xi. 1, 2 does not prove that the temple in Jerusalem was standing when the Apocalypticist wrote.

Still greater importance is attached to chap. xiii. 1, 18 compared with chap. xvii. 8-11 by those who argue for the early date of the Apocalypse from individual texts. It is not necessary to refer to authorities different from those mentioned in connexion with chap.

<sup>1</sup> Verse 2.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xx. 9.

xi. 1, 2. The argument is, that the "beast" of these passages, or the head of the beast slaughtered unto death and healed, is the Emperor Nero; that this head is at the same time to be identified with the last of the five kings who in chap. xvii. 10 are "fallen," and that the sixth head is either Galba, who immediately followed Nero, or Vespasian, who succeeded to the throne after what is then regarded as the *interregnum* of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Either Galba or Vespasian becomes thus the king who in chap. xvii. 10 "is" at the moment when the author writes, and, in that short expression, discloses the date of his composition.<sup>1</sup> That date must then be either between the autumn of A.D. 68, the date of Nero's, and the spring of A.D. 69, that of Galba's death; or it must be in the early part of Vespasian's reign, that is, early in A.D. 70. Düsterdieck even goes so far as to fix upon Easter Day of A.D. 70, pre-eminently the Lord's day of the year, as that when the apocalyptic visions were beheld.<sup>2</sup>

Some remarks have already been made upon this point;<sup>3</sup> but its importance renders it desirable to consider it more fully.

<sup>1</sup> Renan is probably the most eminent of those who assign the date of the Apocalypse to the reign of Galba, and this on the ground of chap. xvii. 10. At the same time Prof. Bruston has called attention to the fact that, in numbering the seven emperors, Renan begins with Julius Cæsar, in which case the sixth, under whom chap. xvii. 10 shows that

the book was written, is Nero (Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero)! Is not Bruston right in denouncing the "scientific frivolity" which can lead to such a "strange absurdity"?—*Le Chiffre*, 666, p. 17, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> *Lectures*, iv. p. 142.



The theory starts with the supposition that the seven heads of the beast are seven emperors of Rome. We leave this point untouched,<sup>1</sup> remarking only that there ought to be more agreement among the advocates of a theory upon which so much is based as to who the seven are.<sup>2</sup> The essential point is that by the head, the stroke of whose death was healed, we are to understand Nero, who, in the popular expectation, had either returned or was about to return from the grave.<sup>3</sup>

To say that, if the author of the Apocalypse adopted such an idea, his book is degraded into a paltry puzzle is true, but not an argument of which we can here avail ourselves. We make our appeal

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Comm.* on chap. xvii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Some begin the enumeration with Julius Caesar, when Nero becomes the sixth king, and the Apocalypse is written under him. But, this being wholly unsuitable to the idea that Nero is the subject of chap. xvii. 8, the favourite computation is that beginning with Augustus, in which case we obtain Nero for the fifth king who is to return after he has fallen. Others again, when they have reached Nero, omit Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, and pass on to Vespasian. "Thus, by changing the usual starting point, or leaving out of the usual list of the Cæsars any number found convenient, any view we please may be substantiated by this kind of interpretation" (Alford, *Prol. to Rev.* p.

235). It may be observed that, though there is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the first of the imperial line of Rome, the Jewish, Christian, and apocryphal Christian chronology of early times begins with Julius. So it is in Josephus, the *Chronicon Paschale*, and at least one of the Sibylline books. The different authorities are summarised by Lücke (*Versuch*, p. 839, note 2). Schürer says that this point "may be regarded as settled." (*The Jewish People*, div. ii. vol. iii. pp. 103, 4.)

<sup>3</sup> Düsterdieck substitutes for Nero personally the thought of the Roman power in the abstract, which was so severely shaken by the death of Nero, but was restored under Vespasian.

simply to the general and special exegesis of chaps. xiii. and xvii.

(1) The supposition that the beast is Nero fails to draw that distinction between the beast and its heads which is demanded by the whole passage.<sup>1</sup> It rather identifies the two. It starts with the supposition that Nero is the *head*, "as though it had been slaughtered unto death," in chap. xiii. 3, and it finds the same emperor distinctly indicated in the "*beast*" of verse 18 of the same chapter. Yet nothing can be clearer than that in chap. xiii. 3 a distinction is drawn between the beast itself and the heads there spoken of. One head is killed, and the beast dies, but the *head* does not live again. As shown by the second *αὐτοῦ* of the verse, it is the beast that lives again. The *τοῦ θηρίου* and the *τῶ θηρίῳ* of verse 4 confirm this conclusion, while all that is related in verses 5-8 belongs equally to the beast, not the head. Further, the crowned horns of the beast<sup>2</sup> do not *historically* appear till we reach chap. xvii. 12 (they are "ten kings *which have received no kingdom as yet*"), and, as this is later than the time of the first six heads, no one of these can be the beast. Still further, the beast is not only represented as differing from any single head; it is the concentrated expression of them all. Whatever of evil there is in each of them flows from it, and must be restored to it when we would form a true conception of what it is. Then only do we know it fully when, gathering into itself every

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Weiss, *Einl.* p. 382.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xiii. 1.

previous element of its demoniacal power, it is about to exert its last and fiercest paroxysm of rage before it goes "into perdition."<sup>1</sup> By the confession even of those against whom we contend<sup>2</sup> it is "the eighth" mentioned in chap. xvii. 11; it is "of the seven," and yet it is to be distinguished from them. Finally, that this is the correct view of "the beast" in chap. xiii. is further established by the fact that in verses 14-17 of that chapter we have the *whole* work of the second beast in its service, as well as its own work, set before us as *fully and finally accomplished*. "The beast," therefore, to which our attention is here called, cannot be the same as any one of its heads, and thus cannot be Nero.

(2) The theory entirely fails to do justice to the language of the Seer with regard both to the wounding and the healing of the head spoken of. First, in reference to the wounding; for the rendering alike of the Authorised and Revised Versions,—in the one, "as it were wounded unto death;" in the other, "as though it had been smitten unto death,"—is an imperfect representation of the original. The Greek words are *ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον*.<sup>3</sup> The verb *σφάζειν* occurs eight times in the Apocalypse.<sup>4</sup> In every one of these cases, omitting that before us, it must be translated "slaughtered" or "slain," the former being preferable, as there can be no doubt that

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xvii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Düsterdieck, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xiii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Chaps. v. 6, 9, 12; vi. 4, 9; xiii. 3, 8; xviii. 24.

the word is used in its sacrificial sense, most commonly directly,<sup>1</sup> though once at least in mocking caricature.<sup>2</sup> How can it be otherwise translated here? Besides which, the statement of the verse now under consideration is the counterpart of that in chap. v. 6, where we read of "the Lamb as though it had been slaughtered." In both cases death had actually taken place, and that too at the hands of another. The "head" spoken of, therefore, cannot be Nero, who fell by his own hand. But the main point is that we have *death* before us. It will not do to say with Bleek that "the head of the beast is apparently killed by a sword wound, from which he again recovers."<sup>3</sup> The killing is real, and to regard it in any other light is to do exegetical injustice to the text. Yet the popular belief was not that Nero had died, but that he was hidden somewhere in the East. Secondly, the slaughtered head is healed. The beast lives on after the fatal stroke, the stroke of its death.<sup>4</sup> Not a return from flight, but a *resurrection from death*, is spoken of. The beast thus dies and lives again, a *travesty* of Him who "became dead, and behold, He is alive."<sup>5</sup>

Not only so. It is in this character that homage is paid to the beast. The "marvelling" after him alluded to in chap. xiii. 3 is distinctly connected with that fact, and Bleek admits it. "Recovery," he says, "contributed to procure him a large following on

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. v. 6, 9, 12; vi. 9; xiii. 8; xviii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. vi. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Lectures*, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. i. 18.

earth.”<sup>1</sup> The words, “a large following,” indeed, express very inadequately the extent of the marvelling alluded to. “*The whole earth*,” it is said, “marvelled after the beast.”<sup>2</sup> With the same characteristics are connected the subsequent statements of the chapter.<sup>3</sup>

Now the question is whether by any latitude of interpretation all this can be applied to Nero, or whether it can be explained by the rumour which is said to have prevailed, that after his death he would return to life, and revive the horrors of his former reign. We urge that it is totally inapplicable. It is almost certain, indeed, that no such rumour was in circulation at the early date when the Apostle is supposed by most to have written. The thought would seem, rather, to have arisen long afterwards, when the misinterpretation of this passage gave it birth. Even Renan allows that “the general opinion was that the monster (Nero), healed by a Satanic power, kept himself concealed somewhere and would return.”<sup>4</sup> Again, the words, “the whole earth,” or the other words, “every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation,” are far too comprehensive to be applied only to the Roman Empire, to say nothing of the fact that when, in chap. xvi. 13, we read of the three unclean spirits, one of which comes out of the mouth of *the beast*, we are told in verse 14 that they go forth “unto the kings of *the whole inhabited earth*, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the

<sup>1</sup> *In loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Verse 3.

<sup>3</sup> Verses 7-9, comp. also chap. xvii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *L'Ant.* p. 350.

Almighty." Nothing so comprehensive could be said of Nero. Once more, the song of praise in honour of the beast in chap. xiii. 4 is equally inconsistent with the supposition we are now combating. If it applies to Nero at all, it must apply to him as *Nero redux*.<sup>1</sup> But there is not a tittle of evidence to show that homage of this kind was paid to the thought of the returned or resuscitated tyrant. The acclamations with which he had been received by the citizens of Rome, when he returned from Campania, his hands red with the blood of his murdered mother, belong to a period before his death, and afford no indication of the feelings with which he was regarded after that event. It is true that some even then cherished his memory and decked his tomb with flowers. But, as invariably happens when a tyrant dies, the sentiment of the masses underwent an immediate and profound revulsion. Suetonius tells us that "the public joy was so great upon the occasion that the people ran up and down with caps upon their heads."<sup>2</sup> Horror rather than admiration filled their breasts. Is it possible that St. John, who, on the theory now before us, was so much a student of contemporary history, could have deluded himself with a series of fantastic imaginations in which he stood alone?<sup>3</sup>

(3) Other statements of chaps. xiii. and xvii.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. chap. xvii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Nero*, cap. 57.

<sup>3</sup> It may perhaps be said that St. John is not so much describing the present as anticipating the

future. But, if so, we are introduced into such a medley of correct prophecy on the one hand and unauthorised and unfulfilled expectation on the other, that it

are hardly less decisive against the idea that the beast is Nero. Thus chap. xiii. 5 becomes in that case unintelligible. How can it be said of Nero that, after his return (for the beast's return is here supposed to have taken place), he had given him a mouth speaking blasphemies, or authority to continue forty and two months? Or what war did he then make with the saints such as that spoken of in verse 7? Again, if the beast is Nero there can be no doubt that Babylon is Rome. We shall then have in chap. xvii. 3-7 Nero bearing Rome, while Rome, his directress and guide, holds the reins and with skilful hand secures by his means the accomplishment of her plans. Does this correspond to the reality? Once more, if the beast is Nero, those who defend that interpretation ought to explain the meaning of chap. xix. 20, where we are told that the beast was "*cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone.*"

The considerations now adduced are sufficient to show that the beast of chaps. xiii. and xvii. is not Nero, and that these chapters afford no support to the argument founded upon them for the early date of the Apocalypse. Chap. xiii. 17, 18, however, has still to be examined; and there, we are told, the Seer himself settles the matter in such a way as to put an end to

becomes impossible to form any clear conception of his mental state. Düsterdieck, who makes the "seventh king" of chap. xvii. 10 to be Titus, and the "eighth" of the following verse to be Domitian, is much exercised on this

point, and can only give as his explanation that the "singular error" mingled with the truth shows "a certain incompleteness of prophetic insight without by any means wholly destroying it!" (*in loc.*)

all dubiety. The words of these verses are, "And that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, *even* the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty and six."

In considering these words we start with the idea that, according to the system known among the Jews as *Gematria*, the number 666 is obtained by adding together the numerical values of the letters of a name. It is not, indeed, certain that this is the case. For the imprinting of the beast's name or number or mark upon his followers is an undoubted travesty of that writing upon the forehead of the high priest which is said to be written upon every one that "overcometh,"<sup>1</sup> and that writing was less a name than a clause—"Holiness to the Lord." The probability is, however, that a *name* is mysteriously hinted at.

Accepting this idea, it is marvellous to think of the number of names suggested by different scholars, and in different ages of the Church, as the explanation of the Apostle's words. The following list, probably the latest compiled, is taken from the second edition of Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*,<sup>2</sup>—"Latinus, Cæsar Augustus, Nero, and other Roman Emperors down to Diocletian; Julian the Apostate, Genseric, Mohammed (*Maometia*), Luther (*Martinus Lutherus*), Joannes Calvinus, Beza Antitheos, Louis XIV.,

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. ii. 17; iii. 12; xiv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> ii. p. 843.



Napoleon Bonaparte, the Duke of Reichstadt (called "King of Rome"), Napoleon III., the initial letters of the first ten Roman Emperors from Octavianus (Augustus) to Titus, including the three usurpers, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius." To this list we may add the name recently suggested by Bruston, Professor of Theology at Montauban, Nimrod Ben Cush, as also Völter's suggestion, Trajanus Hadrianus, and that of Spitta, Γάιος Καίσαρ.

The above list is sufficient to show what a fine field is still open to the ingenious mind in this department of inquiry. The possibilities are by no means exhausted. Let the inquirer go over the notable names of any important era in the history either of the Church or the world, and he will certainly discover many persons with the qualification of the beast that we are now considering. "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?"

We turn again to the list, and, with a single exception demanding more particular attention, the names on it may be disposed of by the simple consideration that not one of them has found any general measure of acceptance, and that we have no argument to produce why any one should be lifted out of the state of discredit into which all have fallen. The exception is Neron Cæsar, the letters of which, when the name is spelled in Hebrew, נרון קסר, yield the required number,—נ = 50, ר = 200, ו = 6, ן = 50, ק = 100, ס = 60, ר = 200, in all 666.

To this suggestion an amount of value has been attached which it is hardly possible to exaggerate. The honour of the discovery has been contended for as the seven cities of old contended for being the birthplace of Homer; Fritzsche, Benary, Hitzig, Reuss, and Ewald (at least in part) have severally claimed it as their own, and it certainly seems to have occurred to each in the course of his own independent studies. Once made it soon attained an almost unexampled acceptance. "It has been adopted by Baur, Zeller, Hilgenfeld, Volkmar, Hausrath, Krenkel, Gebhardt, Renan, Aubé, Réville, Sabatier, Dr. Davidson, Stuart, and Cowles. It is just now the most popular interpretation."<sup>1</sup> We may add Bleek, Beyschlag, and Farrar.

Not only so. Some of these critics, whose high claim to be heard on a point of the kind no one will dispute, have adopted it with enthusiasm, as if a burden which had pressed upon the scholarship of centuries had been at length removed. In these circumstances the suggestion demands respectful and careful consideration, and in that spirit we desire to speak of it.

(a) Much importance has been attached to the fact that, adopting the Nero-hypothesis, we may easily assign a probable reason for the mysterious manner in which St. John thus indicates the name of Nero. It would have been dangerous to state his name more plainly. St. Paul exhibits a similar

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *u.s.* p. 846.

caution when, in 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7, referring as it would seem to the Roman power, he describes it in the ambiguous terms, "that which restraineth," "one that restraineth now." His brother Apostle had still greater reason to be guarded in his language. He lived in more critical times. The monster upon the throne had given vent to all the unbridled licentiousness of his rage, and to have pointed to him in plain language would have been to court destruction not only for a Christian writer, but for the whole Christian community. This reasoning is entitled to little weight. There is indeed no appearance of concealment upon the part either of St. Paul or of St. John. The former, when in Thessalonica, had not only "told" his converts what he was now again saying, but was satisfied that they "knew" it,<sup>1</sup> and we cannot suppose that it would have been more dangerous to give a full statement of his meaning in a letter intended only for a few than to preach it at a time when he could use his living voice, and stir the whole city by his presence.<sup>2</sup> St. John is not less free from alarm. The tone of the passage shows us that at the proper time, whether now or afterwards, he wishes the number, and if the number the name, of the beast to be known. If too he thought of persons beyond the pale of the Christian community, he could not fail to be aware that his veiled allusion to Nero would rather stimulate than repress curiosity, and rather increase than diminish the rage of adversaries. The words

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 1-9.

also, "Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast," with which he introduces his statement, do not convey the impression that we have before us a human puzzle which only mental skill can resolve. They lead us to the thought of a Divine mystery in which God has hidden solemn truth from all who will not approach it with submission to His guidance. Or, if he wished to conceal the name of Nero, why is he not equally careful in the case of the city of Rome? One of the arguments most relied upon by those who see Nero in the number of the beast is that it is impossible to mistake the allusion to Rome in the mention of the woman with whom the beast is so intimately associated:—"The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth"; "The woman whom thou sawest is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."<sup>1</sup> Be it so. But if Rome be thus clearly indicated, who can the beast be but the Emperor, and that Emperor Nero? The curtain closed by the one hand is opened by the other.

(b) It is not the *name* but the *number* of the beast upon which St. John mainly dwells. No doubt we are proceeding on the supposition that the number is obtained by adding together the numerical values of the letters that compose the name. But there is a difference between an argument from a name to a number, and from a number to a name. In the former case the name is of chief importance; in the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xvii. 9 18.

latter the number. In the former we must know the name before we can estimate its import; in the latter the import has all its meaning, even although the name is as yet unknown. This seems to suggest the true meaning of the difficult clause, "it is the number of a man." Züllig argues from these words, and upon the common interpretation with no small force, that the beast must be a man. But, when we compare chap. xxi. 17, such a conclusion seems to be hardly warranted. St. John rather means, "Here is a number from which, while we gather what it expresses, we may judge, *as we judge in the case of men*, of the character of the being to which it belongs." The argument does not require that the name of the beast should have been at that moment known.

(c) The last-mentioned consideration may even suggest, as it has suggested to some, the impression that the Seer does not give the name of the beast because he does not know it. In the form in which it is spoken of in chap. xiii. 17 the beast had not yet appeared. It was to appear after the seventh head had been manifested, and that head was "not yet come."<sup>1</sup> The beast, therefore, had not yet received its personal and *historical* name. But the Seer knew its number to be 666. In that number its character was expressed, and the name would in due time correspond both to character and number. With that St. John was satisfied. It ought not to be necessary to remind the student of the Johannine

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xvii. 10.

writings that in them the word "name" is the expression of character in a far deeper and more comprehensive sense than in any other writings of the New Testament.

The observations now made are in a certain sense preliminary. We proceed to others showing more directly that the beast of chap. xiii. 18 cannot be Nero.

(*d*) That interpretation makes it necessary to have recourse to the letters of the Hebrew instead of the Greek alphabet. The Hebrew character of the Apocalypse as a whole may indeed suggest to us<sup>1</sup> that the name in St. John's mind was most probably a Hebrew one. But there is much to lead us to a different conclusion. St. John is certainly writing not with the Jewish but with the *great Gentile Church* in his eye, and this would lead him to Greek rather than Hebrew letters. Then the beast springs from a Gentile, not a Jewish, source. It ascends out of the "sea";<sup>2</sup> and there can be no doubt, especially when we compare with this the origin of the second beast which is of the "earth,"<sup>3</sup> that by the "sea" we are to understand the mass of the Gentile nations. This would again lead St. John to a Greek rather than a Hebrew name. He writes his book too in Greek. On other occasions he employs the letters of the Greek alphabet in order to give, by means of letters, utterance to his thoughts.<sup>4</sup> When he uses the Hebrew he notifies that he does so, as if aware

<sup>1</sup> As it did to Züllig, ii. p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xiii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xiii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. i. 8 ; xxi. 6 ; xxii. 13.

that his readers needed the intimation.<sup>1</sup> Few things are more certain than that the Christians of Asia Minor had little or no acquaintance with Hebrew. Even if St. John connected the name of the beast with his own day he would probably associate both its blasphemies and the homage paid to it with a language more universal than Hebrew, and that language could only be Greek. We are called to think of Greek rather than Hebrew letters, and no Greek rendering of the name of Nero gives the required number.<sup>2</sup>

(e) Even if the letters be Hebrew it is only by force that they can be made to accomplish the end for which they are appealed to. The names of Ewald and Renan stand at the very head of Semitic scholarship in Europe, and neither scholar can be suspected for a moment of leaning towards the traditions of the Church, yet both of them have pronounced it almost, if not altogether, impossible to believe that the words Nero Caesar could in the first century have been spelled in the way demanded by the proposed solution. The former, accordingly, first inserts an additional letter in KSR, then substitutes Rome for Nero, and

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. ix. 11 ; xvi. 16 ; comp. John v. 2 ; xix. 13, 17 ; xx. 16.

<sup>2</sup> In his recent *Introduction to the New Testament*, Weiss, on the ground above-mentioned, finds the idea that the beast of chap. xiii. 18 is Nero "in the highest degree improbable." He then adds, "But the idea is shipwrecked on the fact that the

writer is treating of the number of the beast which is the Roman power, not Nero, and that the name in his eye is not the designation of a person, but is intended to mark the beast's characteristic being" (*eine charakteristische Wesensbezeichnung*), p. 383.

lastly obtains the number 616 (of which we have still to speak) instead of 666.<sup>1</sup> The latter, agreeing with Ewald as to the spelling but not as to the number represented, gives it as his explanation that the author of the Apocalypse has probably of design suppressed the additional letter in order that he may have a symmetrical cypher. With that letter (the Hebrew *Iod* as the second letter of the word) he would have had 676.<sup>2</sup> Surely it is too much to expect that men shall readily receive an explanation so heavily encumbered.

(*f*) The argument drawn from the various reading 616 instead of 666 possesses no substantial force. The former number represents Nero Kesar, not Neron Kesar; and the argument is that a Jewish Christian, knowing that Nero, not Neron, was to Gentiles generally the imperial name, would be led to substitute the one for the other by dropping the final letter *n*, and would thus obtain († being = 50) 616 instead of 666. At first sight the argument is plausible, but it breaks down on the fact that the ancient Father to whom we owe our earliest information as to the reading 616 instead of 666 knew nothing of the proposed explanation. Although himself offering conjectures at the time as to the meaning of the mysterious symbols, he makes no allusion to either Neron Cæsar or Nero Cæsar; and, after mentioning one or two solutions, he concludes that St. John would have given the name had he thought

<sup>1</sup> *Die Johann. Schrift.* ii. 262.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Ant.* p. 416.



it right that it should be uttered. It is a curious fact, illustrating the little importance to be attached to the argument under consideration, that the Father to whom we refer preferred another rendering Teitan (T = 300 ; E = 5 ; I = 10 ; T = 300 ; A = 1 ; N = 50 ; in all 666), from which, if we drop the final *n*, we get Teita, numbering 616, and a better representation than Teitan of the Emperor Titus, by whom Jerusalem was overthrown. When we find, therefore, that, notwithstanding the desire to penetrate into the meaning of the enigma which marked the early Church, this solution was not discovered, we have a proof that the discovery has been made by a false process, and is worthless.

(*g*) We venture to ask whether in the conduct of this discussion sufficient attention has been paid to St. John's use of the word "name," and to the precise manner in which he makes the statement of the verse under consideration. In all the writings of the Apostle the "name" of any one is much more than a designation by which the person receiving it is identified. It marks the person in himself. It tells us not only who he is but what he is. It has a deep internal signification; and importance belongs to it not because the name is first attached to a person and then interpreted, but because it has its meaning first, and has then been affixed, under the guidance of God, to the person whose character or work it afterwards expresses. *There must thus be a bond of connexion between the number and the name, deeper and*

*stronger than the fact that the letters of a particular name yield a particular number.* Familiar as the writer shows himself to be with the method of transposing letters and numbers then in vogue, he must have been well aware that *many* names would yield the number 666, probably quite as many as the long list which swells the history of the interpretation of this text. Of what use would it have been merely to call attention to this? The questions would instantly arise, Which is the true solution? Wherein is one name so given better than another? There must be some additional element in St. John's thought. Let us endeavour to discover it by making the supposition that he had been dealing with the human name of the Redeemer, "Jesus." He cannot fail to have known that the letters of that name in Greek give the number 888 ( $\iota = 10$ ;  $\eta = 8$ ;  $\sigma = 200$ ;  $\omicron = 70$ ;  $\nu = 400$ ;  $\varsigma = 200$ ), but many other names must also have done so. What would lend peculiar importance to the fact that the correspondence existed in the name of Jesus? The combination of two things does it: first, the meaning of the figures; secondly, the meaning of the name given by the appointment of God. *The two correspond:* behold the expression of the Divine will! The figure 8 had a Divine meaning to the Jew. It was upon the eighth day that circumcision, the initiatory act of a new life, was performed. The eighth day was the great day of the feast of Tabernacles.<sup>1</sup> What in Matt. v. 10 is apparently an

<sup>1</sup> John vii. 37.

eighth Beatitude is really the beginning of a new cycle in which that character of the Christian which had been described in the seven previous Beatitudes is thought of as coming out in such a manner before the world that the world persecutes. Upon the eighth day, on the first day of a new week, our Lord rose from the grave, bringing His Church with Him to her true resurrection life. But the name "Jesus" has *also* a Divine meaning.<sup>1</sup> In the very spirit therefore of this passage St. John might have spoken of the number of the "name" of Jesus as 888. As it is he is occupied with one who, in his death, resurrection, and second coming, is the very counterpart of our Lord. He has a "name," a character and work, which are the opposite of Christ's. That name, known now, or to be known, will be capable of translation into numbers yielding 666. Ominous numbers! falling short of the sacred seven to the same extent as the eights went beyond it; associated too with so much that had been most godless and impious in Old Testament history. The nations of Canaan had been six in number.<sup>2</sup> The image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, and for refusing to worship which Daniel and his companions were committed to the fiery furnace, had been sixty cubits high by six cubits broad.<sup>3</sup> The weight of gold that came to Solomon every year, in token of the subjection of the heathen nations around him, had been 666 talents.<sup>4</sup> On the sixth day of the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. i. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xx. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Dan. iii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings x. 14 ; 2 Chron. ix. 13.

week at the sixth hour, when Jesus hung upon the Cross, the power of darkness culminated.<sup>1</sup> What dread thoughts were connected with such sixes! The argument then is,—these numbers correspond to the name of the beast when its meaning is taken into account. Both tell the same tale; behold how God expresses Himself regarding it! Now for all this the words Nero Cæsar were utterly useless. The second of the two words might have a meaning, but the first was meaningless. It was simply the name of an individual. Merely to count up the numerical value of the figures obtained from Nero Cæsar would not have answered the Apostle's purpose, and could never have filled his mind with the awe that is upon him in this verse.

These considerations seem to show that the mere equivalence in value (even supposing the equivalence to be established) between the letters of Nero's name and the number 666 is no proof that the Roman tyrant is thus mysteriously indicated. An examination of the Seer's own words is sufficient to show that he must have had something else before him than any thought of Nero; and we are justified in concluding that the whole Nero-theory will most probably supply only an illustration of the manner in which exegetical, not less than other, fancies may flourish for a moment and then decay.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Confirmation of what has been said in the text may be found in the following words of Weiss

(*Einleitung*, p. 382, note 1), published since the first edition of this work appeared. Referring to chap. xiii. 3, 12, 14, Weiss says,

2. From considerations in favour of the early date of the Apocalypse suggested by particular texts, we pass to those arising out of the general character of the contents and style of the book.

(1) It is urged that, had Jerusalem been destroyed before the Apocalypse was written, the author could not have failed to notice that event. To what end, it may be replied, should he have specially noticed it? He is not writing history, either past or future. He is gathering together in one brief summary, in one *coup d'œil*, the whole general character of that "short time" which is to elapse between the coming of Christ in His humiliation and His *manifestation* of Himself in glory. What in such circumstances we should expect of an Apocalyptist is, that he will have before him the character of all God's dealings with His Church and her foes, both in previous ages and in his own time, and that he will so use these as to gain from them a clear conception of the principles upon which the unchangeable Jehovah who has guided His people hitherto will continue to extend to them His protecting care. Now this is precisely what we find in the Apocalypse. The fall of Egypt or Nineveh or Babylon would have suited the writer's purpose in some respects at least not less than the fall of Jerusalem. Yet he makes no mention of any one of these catastrophes. He shows

"The commonly accepted application of this figure to the return of Nero from the kingdom of the dead is, from an exegetical point of view, *completely untenable*. For

Nero is not the beast, but is one of its heads, and the healing of its death-wound is not future, but has already taken place."

that he remembers them. He often takes advantage of particulars connected with them; but he does not notice the events themselves. A similar remark may be made with regard to the overthrow of Judaism and the destruction of Jerusalem. Neither of these is mentioned in such a way as to remind us of the historian or the prophet. But both are presupposed. So much is this the case with the former that it was the leading idea of one of the most distinguished interpreters of the book that the first half of it—to the end of chap. xi.—was designed to set forth the coming overthrow of Judaism. The idea was a mistaken one; yet the book does describe a state of things in which the overthrow of Judaism is included. The whole book is pervaded by the conception that a degenerate Judaism is the type and emblem of all opposition to the truth, and that as such it is especially doomed. Again, as to the latter of the two facts mentioned, the destruction of Jerusalem, is there not reason to think that, just as in the case of Egypt and of Babylon, the writer makes use of facts connected with that event, only catching their deep general significance and extending and spiritualising them? If the idea of the holy city's being trodden under foot of the nations<sup>1</sup> may be taken from our Lord's words in Luke xxi. 24 as much as from its sack by the Roman armies, the same thing cannot be said of the "*burning*" of Babylon, the false Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Our Lord had said *nothing* of that kind. His words had been, "There

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xviii. 9.

shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down";<sup>1</sup> but He had not spoken of "burning." How came St. John to think of it? No answer can be given except that the actual destruction of Jerusalem was present to his mind. That awful scene of desolation rose up before him. He appears to "stand afar off" and to see "the smoke of the city's burning." The thought of it supplies him with some of his most impressive imagery; and in the judgment executed upon the degenerate metropolis of God's ancient people he beholds the type of that still wider and more terrible judgment which shall be accomplished upon all who "crucify the Lord afresh and put Him to an open shame."<sup>2</sup>

It would indeed have been much more unnatural to find the book wanting in any specific reference to the fall of Jerusalem on the supposition that it was written before, rather than after, that event. All writers who adopt this view explain the Apocalypse as a real or professed prophecy. But what had been the most startling prophecy of Christ before He died? Had it not been that of the destruction of Jerusalem?

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 2 and parallels.

<sup>2</sup> It has indeed been sometimes thought that the idea of the "burning" referred to is taken from the burning of Rome under Nero. Chap. xvii. 16, 17 shows this to be incorrect. Rome could not be considered as a "harlot," and in Nero's atrocious deed there is nothing to correspond to the ten horns, or to God's putting it into

their mind to do His will. The epithet Sodom applied to the apocalyptic city is especially apt if we suppose it used *after* the fall of Jerusalem. In her destruction coming, and that by fire, *after* the Christians had removed to Pella, St. John saw the antitype of the burning of Sodom on its judgment day, *after* Lot and his household had gone out of it.

And now, in A.D. 68, the prophet, unlikely as it seemed ever to be so, hears the tread of the Roman soldiers and sees their desolating march. How must the prophecy, supposing that he wrote at that time, have sprung up with renewed vividness before him! and how difficult is it to think that he should have been silent as to what he knew, upon the authority of his Lord, was to be the final issue!

(2) It is urged that the tone and spirit of the Apocalypse bespeak an early, not a late, date; and this particularly in two respects,—the copiousness of its imagery and the passionate ardour of its style. Both of these are thought to correspond better with the age of the Apostle in A.D. 68 than in A.D. 95 or 96. Yet, were not the greater age contended for by many, the lesser might have been thought equally inconsistent with the phenomenon. The fire of youth does not generally burn after threescore. Not to dwell, however, upon this, let us look more closely at the argument.

(a) The copiousness of the imagery is a difficulty.—But the imagery is Jewish, and the basis of every figure is to be found in the Old Testament. We have no flights of fancy that may be said to be the writer's own, and no figures drawn from the rich stores of an originally poetic or imaginative mind. Were it otherwise there might be more ground to allege that St. John's poetic faculty ought to have become weakened and his imagination dimmed by age. Even this may not always happen. The richly poetical blessing of



Jacob<sup>1</sup> and the song and blessing of Moses<sup>2</sup> were both written in extreme old age. Psalms lxxi. and lxxii. are the closing prayers of David, whose last days<sup>3</sup> were at least as infirm as those of St. John after his return to Ephesus. Men like Boehme and Swedenborg may be appealed to as a proof that religious thoughts and visions may retain all the vividness of their colouring at a late period of life. It may even be peculiarly so when the mind has been nurtured amidst the imagery employed by it, and has felt more powerfully with each passing year that the thoughts enfolded in that imagery solve for it, with increasing clearness, the problems of life. What has been said is confirmed by the next part of the difficulty before us.

(*b*) The energy and passionate ardour of the style.—There is no reason to think that the heat and fire appearing in the style of the Apocalypse belonged only to the Apostle's youth. They did belong to that period of his life, but they did not disappear with it. On the contrary, the stories connected with his old age show that to the very end there burned in him the same fervour of passion which would have called down fire upon the Samaritan village,<sup>4</sup> or which led our Lord to bestow upon him the title "Son of thunder."<sup>5</sup> The Gospel and Epistles of St. John belong, by general acknowledgment, to the last decade of the first century; and we have already said enough to show that it is

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxxii., xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxi. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Luke ix. 54.

<sup>5</sup> Mark iii. 17.

impossible to draw a contrast between the fire of youth as it appears in the John of the first three evangelists and the mellowed gentleness of age said to appear in his Gospel and Epistles. His vehement, keen, impetuous temperament is not less observable in the latter than in the former. We seem to trace at every step, alike while the conflict of Jesus with His enemies is described and when he denounces the opponents of a true faith in Him, the burning zeal of one who would denounce as he does the guilty "Jews."

(3) Again, however, it is objected that the Apocalypse indicates in its whole tone of thought an earlier development than that of the Gospel, and that it is therefore more naturally assigned to an early period of the writer's life. The following are the words of Dr. Westcott: "It is before the destruction of Jerusalem. It offers the characteristic thoughts of the fourth Gospel in that form of development which belongs to the earliest apostolic age. It belongs to different historical circumstances, to a different phase of intellectual progress, to a different theological stage from that of St. John's Gospel; and yet it is not only harmonious with it in teaching, but, in the order of thought, it is the necessary germ out of which the Gospel proceeded by a process of life."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Westcott's authority is high, and it may be more readily deferred to by many because he accepts the Apocalypse as not less the work of St. John than the Gospel. But the above language is too general to carry with it conviction. Dr. West-

<sup>1</sup> *Speaker's Comm., Intr. to St. John*, lxxxiv., lxxxvii.

cott allows that the Apocalypse contains the "characteristic thoughts" of the fourth Gospel, and we are entitled to ask that the earlier form of development of these thoughts shall be set over against the later. To what thoughts does the remark apply? The fundamental truth of the Divinity of our Lord is certainly not less developed by the Apocalyptist than by the Evangelist. Some even of the most striking testimonies to that truth are supplied by the former. Reuss fully allows that the Christology speaks of a late date,<sup>1</sup> and Völter argues to the same effect.<sup>2</sup> A similar remark applies to the resurrection and glorification of Christ. This was one of those truths which, when first announced by Jesus, the disciples did not understand. They were only to comprehend it fully through the experience of later years. It is the fundamental truth of the Apocalypse. Throughout that book Jesus is the risen Lord, alive for evermore.<sup>3</sup> Or, once more, let us take the thought of the universality of the redemption given us in Christ, and nothing can be more universal than the conception of the Apocalypse upon this point. The Church of that book is the great Gentile Church in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, the Church spiritual, universal, and complete.

With more plausibility may the strong eschatological element in the Apocalypse be at first sight urged against the supposition of a late date for its composition. It may be said that during the first century of the Christian era the development of the

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte*, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *u. s.* p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. i. 18.

Church's doctrine passed through three great stages. First, it was eschatological, as in St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians and in separate passages of 1 Corinthians and Romans, epistles belonging to his earlier stage of literary activity. Secondly, it was soteriological, as in the Epistles to the Galatians and Romans, epistles for the most part connected with a later stage of the Apostle's progress. Lastly, it was Christological, as in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, epistles associated with his latest stage. The inference, it is urged, is that the eschatological Apocalypse must be assigned to a much earlier part of the century than towards its close. But plausible as, like all great generalisations, this statement is, it not only fails in several particulars, but even strengthens the hands of those who contend for the later date. For (*a*) it is not possible so to mark off the three successive periods of development in the short space between A.D. 50 and A.D. 90 as to leave no room for the fact that individuals do not always occupy the same ground as those around them, but may, according to their own peculiarities or circumstances, be either in advance of or behind their time. (*b*) The Apocalypse, so far from indicating that the Church was at the moment in the eschatological stage, rather shows that she had fallen away from that, and needed to be recalled to it. What is the meaning of chap. ii. 4 or iii. 3, and more particularly of that constant returning, in ever heightening earnestness, to the theme of the Lord's Second Coming which marks the seven epistles

to the churches,<sup>1</sup> if it be not that the eschatological stage in her development had been too much left behind; and that we are thus placed in the end rather than the middle of the first century? St. John would re-invigorate a truth which was beginning to fade. (c) Both the Soteriology and the Christology of the Apocalypse are singularly developed and complete; and all that can be said is that they have not suppressed the Eschatology. Yet surely what occupied so prominent a place in the mind and teaching of our Lord, might well occupy a not less important place in the minds of His disciples towards the close of the first century. It must be remembered, too, that in times of trouble eschatological teaching always revives, and who can doubt that the time of the Apocalypse was in even a far deeper than ordinary sense such a time, the time, as it was believed to be, of "the great tribulation."<sup>2</sup> (d) The production of other apocalyptic writings of a similar character towards the end of the first century is fatal to the validity of the argument. It is only necessary to remind the reader of the 4th Book of Esdras, regarding the late date of which almost all inquirers are agreed.

It is true, no doubt, that the *form* in which the characteristic thoughts of St. John are presented to us in the Apocalypse is often that of the earlier dispensation or of the early Christian age. But this sprang out of the nature of the book and of the class of

<sup>1</sup> Comp. p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. vii. 14.

literature to which it belongs. Because an early age delights in allegory and figure it does not follow that these may not also be employed in later times. The question relates not to *form* but to *substance*; and, unless it can be shown that the substance of the Apocalypse is only St. John's thoughts in germ, the argument is of no avail. We contend that, looking at the substance, not the form, these thoughts are as highly developed in the Apocalypse as in the Gospel, and that here again, therefore, we have no conclusive proof offered us of the earlier date.

(4) It is urged that the historical notices of the condition of the seven churches of Asia, as depicted in chaps. ii. and iii., reveal a state of matters pointing to the earlier, and inconsistent with the later, date.<sup>1</sup> Two particulars of this condition are said to deserve special attention,—the extreme rigour as well as the source of the persecutions spoken of, and the degeneracy that had taken place alike in doctrine and practice.

(a) The fact of persecution may be allowed, but it by no means follows that it was persecution in the days of Nero. We have already noticed various circumstances connected with it which are much less suitable to the days of that Emperor than to those of Domitian; and Stuart, whose argument upon the point is at best a *petitio principii*, is compelled in summing it up to say, "All this may be true of the churches, and of John's relation to them in the time of

<sup>1</sup> Lücke, *Versuch*, p. 821; *Biblical Review*, i. p. 179; Mac-Stuart, *Commentary*, p. 224; Donald, p. 154.

Domitian some quarter of a century later, and so the argument is not conclusive.”<sup>1</sup> There is also every reason to believe that the troubles under Nero experienced by Christians in the provinces came less from the systematic persecution of their faith, than from the hatred with which they were regarded as the enemies of social order.<sup>2</sup>

As to the allegation, again, that the persecutions spoken of in the seven epistles emanated from Judaism rather than heathenism, and that after the catastrophe which befell their nation the Jews were too much crushed to exhibit so great activity and keenness, it is enough to say that the contrary was the case. The fall of Jerusalem produced upon them its natural effect in intensifying both their bitterness and fanaticism against the Christians; and they were frequently the ringleaders rather than the led in the bitterest persecutions of the time.<sup>3</sup>

(b) That indications are given in the seven epistles of degeneracy in Christian faith and practice is not to be denied. The question is whether it was a degeneracy along the lines noted in the Asiatic churches by St. Paul when he writes to the Ephesians and Colossians, and whether between the date of these epistles and A.D. 68 there was time for it. Bishop Lightfoot answered the first part of this question in the affirmative,—“The same temper prevails, the same errors are

<sup>1</sup> p. 225.

*History of the Church*, i. p. 130 ;  
Gieseler, *ibid.* i. p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> L'Enfant and Beausobre in  
*Lardner*, vi. p. 326 ; Neander,

<sup>3</sup> Comp. Lightfoot, *Ignatius*,  
vol. ii. sect. 2, p. 966.

rife, the same correction must be supplied.”<sup>1</sup> To a certain extent this is true. A community does not move so fast that even an interval of thirty years, much less one of five or six, shall obliterate all points of resemblance between its condition at the beginning and at the close of that period. But, along with some points of similarity, there seem to be important differences. More particularly, the Nicolaitans or Balaamites and the followers of Jezebel spoken of cannot be the same as the adherents of that Essene Judaism which had penetrated Asia Minor in the time of St. Paul. They are a different class, starting not so much from a desire to magnify Jewish ceremonial as to introduce heathen licentiousness. When we come in contact with Judaisers opposed to St. Paul, we find ourselves in the midst of churches in which the Jewish element is strong, and in which it is peculiarly necessary to uphold the freedom of the Gospel. When we read the seven, especially the last four, epistles in the Apocalypse, we are in a different atmosphere. Not the narrowness of Judaism, but the wild immorality and worldliness of heathenism, is now striving to gain the upper hand; and the Christian has to overcome, not Judaism, but the world in its widest sense. In addition to this Holtzmann<sup>2</sup> notices the fact that the Baalamite and Nicolaitan errors, so sharply chastised in the epistles to Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira, are not merely practical errors, but have assumed the form of a *διδασχῆ*,<sup>3</sup> and thus suppose a

<sup>1</sup> *Coloss. Intr.* p. 41.    <sup>2</sup> *Einleitung*, p. 419.    <sup>3</sup> Chap. ii. 14, 15, 24.



certain length of time to have elapsed before this could have taken place; while the errors themselves remind us of the Cerinthians if not even of the Harpocratians, of whom the former certainly belonged to the close of the first, and the latter to the second century.

It may be admitted that the conditions of the case reveal a date subsequent at least to St. Paul's connexion with the Asiatic churches,<sup>1</sup> and corresponding rather to the conditions of the time the coming of which the Apostle had so distinctly assigned to a point "after his departure," and to "the last days."<sup>2</sup> But, if this be so, the space of time at our disposal is extremely brief, not more than A.D. 65 to A.D. 68,—long enough to degenerate if the degeneracy be along lines which previously existed; but hardly long enough if a condition of things largely new must be presupposed in order to account for the special nature of the degeneracy.

(5) The plea that the language of the Apocalypse bespeaks an early and not a late date will demand detailed consideration at a later point.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime it is enough to say that in whatever way we endeavour to account for its peculiarities, these supply

<sup>1</sup> Lücke, *Versuch*, p. 821, speaks strongly upon this point.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xx. 29 and 2 Tim. iii. 1. It is not without importance to observe that in Acts xx. 29, 30 two sources of the coming evil are alluded to, the one (verse 29) from without, the other (verse 30) from

within. Until the family idea of the Church was broken up by the destruction of Jerusalem, the former hardly existed. It was when she had passed into the wide sea of the nations that it became powerful for evil.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. p. 184, etc.

no argument in favour of the early date of the book in which they occur.

(6) There is one branch of internal evidence in favour of a late composition of the Apocalypse to which too little attention has been paid, but which is not without a distinct bearing on the argument. We refer to the similarity which exists between it and one or two of the pseudepigraphical writings which have come down to us. Take, *e.g.*, the 4th Book of Esdras. We have first to satisfy ourselves as to the facts; and, without pretending that the following correspondences exhaust the list, they may be sufficient for our purpose.

The visions of Esdras are mediated by an angel:<sup>1</sup> when under the influence of his visions Esdras "lay as one that had been dead," the angel "comforted him, and set him up upon his feet":<sup>2</sup> when the unrighteous are described it is in the manner so peculiar to St. John, and the misunderstanding of which has so greatly confused the interpretation of his book, for they are "they that dwell upon the earth":<sup>3</sup> when a voice is heard proclaiming the approach of judgment it is "a mighty sounding voice," and "as the voice of many waters":<sup>4</sup> when judgment comes, the place on which Esdras stands is to be "greatly moved" and the world is to "pass away,"<sup>5</sup> the "trumpet shall sound," "friends shall make war against one another

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv. 1; Rev. *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. vi. 13, 17; Rev. i. 15,

<sup>2</sup> Chap. x. 30; Rev. i. 17.

xiv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. vi. 18; Rev. vi. 10, xi. 10, xiii. 14, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. vi. 14, 20; Rev. vi. 14, xxi. 1.

like enemies," and "the springs of the fountains shall not run,"<sup>1</sup> "the books shall be opened before the firmament, and all shall see together":<sup>2</sup> when the Church is described she is "the bride, even the city coming forth that now is withdrawn from the earth,"<sup>3</sup> "paradise is opened, and the tree of life is planted,"<sup>4</sup> fruit and medicine are found in the city,<sup>5</sup> and the idea of "overcoming" is associated with those who are made partakers of its blessedness:<sup>6</sup> when Esdras is cast down by the misfortunes of Zion,—which is presented to him as a woman sitting in a field, mourning aloud and lamenting the sudden loss of her son who, at the moment when he was entering his bridal chamber, fell down and died,—the scene is in an instant changed, the woman's face shines like the lightning, and in her stead there rises up a well-built city, a place with large foundations:<sup>7</sup> when God's anointed one is spoken of it is as a "lion":<sup>8</sup> when the Israelites escape from captivity and go in search of a better country, "they enter by the narrow passages of the river Euphrates. For the Most High then wrought signs for them and stayed the springs of the river till they were passed over":<sup>9</sup> when judgment is executed upon their enemies "there shall be blood from the sword unto the horse's belly":<sup>10</sup> these

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vi. 23, 24; Rev. vi. 4, viii. 6, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. vi. 20; Rev. xx. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. vii. 26; Rev. xxi. 9, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. viii. 52; Rev. ii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. vii. 123; Rev. xxii. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. vii. 128; Rev. ii. 7 etc.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. ix. 9; Rev. xxi.

<sup>8</sup> Chap. xi. 37, xii. 31, 32; Rev. v. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Chap. xiii. 41-44; Rev. xvi. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Chap. xv. 35; Rev. xiv. 20.

things are all to be written in a book:<sup>1</sup> and when their mysteriousness is thought of we are reminded of the necessity of "wisdom" to enable us to understand them, and that they are intended for the "wise" alone.<sup>2</sup> In addition to all this the numbers used in the Book of Esdras and the Apocalypse, such as seven and four, are the same. Remarks of a similar kind, though not to the same extent, may be made regarding the Apocalypse of Baruch.

Now, no one looking at the correspondences of which examples have been given will for a moment suppose that in any one of these books was there copying from the others. The correspondences are brought in in too different connexions, and are too independently used, to permit this to have been the case. They are evidently gathered from the thought of the day when the approaching end of the age was treated of. But such peculiarities as have been noticed are not found in the other pseudepigraphical writings of the first Christian century. The inference, therefore, to which we are conducted by their existence in the Apocalypse of St. John and the other books mentioned is that these books probably belong to much the same date. But, if there be one conclusion touching the Pseudepigrapha upon which we can depend, it is that the books of Esdras and Baruch were written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and at least Esdras in the reign of Domitian. This is distinctly the opinion of Wieseler, Gfrörer, Dillmann,

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xii. 37 ; Rev. i. 19.    <sup>2</sup> Chap. xii. 38, xiv. 46 ; Rev. xiii. 18.

Reuss, Schürer, while Zöckler hesitates only between Domitian and his successor Nerva (96-98).

The objections drawn from internal evidence to the late date of the Apocalypse thus appear, when carefully examined, to possess little or no force. If so, the external evidence is entitled to all the weight which naturally belongs to it, and only one conclusion is admissible. The book was written towards the close of the reign of Domitian, A.D. 95 or 96.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose merely that the general tendency of the internal evidence is in favour of the early date, and that the inquirer, while dealing with it, must be content to wage a defensive warfare. Positive grounds for a late date are also supplied by this branch of the evidence, and with these we may fittingly conclude the argument.

1. The fact that the book is addressed to the churches of Asia Minor is more in harmony with the idea of a late than of an early date in the Apostle's life. We have no proof, but rather the reverse, that St. John was connected with that region of the Church much before the fall of Jerusalem. The general impression is rather that it was only shortly previous to that event that, warned by the signs of the times, he left the holy city and the holy land, and went to Asia Minor. Now it will not be denied that, in its first three chapters, the Apocalypse presupposes an internal connexion between the writer and the Asiatic churches of the closest kind, a connexion which it is hardly possible to think of in any other light

than as marked by affectionate authority on the side of the former, and of willing submission on the side of the latter. When, then, was this connexion established? Certainly not before A.D. 62, for the Epistle to the Ephesians was written about that date; and, in conformity with his settled rule of action, St. Paul would neither have laboured among nor written to the Christians of that neighbourhood had St. John already established himself in their midst.<sup>1</sup> Nor between A.D. 62 and A.D. 68 could the connexion have grown to what it became. The time is too short for the results. The force of this consideration ought surely to be more acknowledged than it has been by those (such as the late Bishop of Durham) who suppose that the Apostle did not leave the holy city till the eve of its destruction.<sup>2</sup>

2. St. John not only addresses the seven churches of Asia in a tone of authority, he addresses them as *representative of the whole Christian Church*. That is, seven *Gentile* churches are fixed upon as a suitable embodiment of the idea of the Church of Christ in her most general or universal aspect. Could this have been the case before the fall of Jerusalem? However the views of Apostles and apostolic men had widened so as to receive the Gentiles upon equal terms with the Jews into the one Body of Christ, can we believe that, before the great catastrophe of A.D. 70, the thought of the Judæo-Christian Church could have been entirely dropped, and that seven churches amongst

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, *Coloss.* p. 41.

the heathen, and certainly made up for the most part of converts from heathenism, could have been selected as the exclusive type of the one Church of Christ? In exact proportion too as, after the manner of the defenders of the early date, we imagine that St. John was animated, for more at least than the first sixty years of his life, by a narrow Judaic instead of a wide Christian spirit, must we allow that before A.D. 70 he could hardly have extended his interests and his sphere of action so widely as the first three chapters of this book show him to have done. If he was about A.D. 60 what he is supposed to have been, it is simply impossible that, during the quiet closing years of Nero and the uneventful period following down to Galba or Vespasian, he could have undergone a change so great as that indicated by the selection of seven Gentile churches to represent the one catholic church of the Redeemer.

3. The whole character of the Apocalypse seems to point to the conclusion that it is occupied with wider issues than those which the early date presupposes. That date is intimately bound up with the idea that the book deals only with one matter of interest and importance, the reign of Nero, the persecution instigated by that tyrant, and the prospect of his final overthrow. Without discussing individual texts, it is enough to ask whether such an idea harmonises with the general character of the book. We at once and fully allow that local circumstances lie at the bottom of the delineation. Both in his Gospel

and in the Apocalypse it is the method of St. John to rise from the particular to the general and from the actual to the ideal. But are we really to believe that the circumstances connected with the Neronic persecution exhaust the meaning of all the passionate pictures, whether of denunciation or of promise, that fill the pages of the latter work? The importance of that persecution has been greatly exaggerated.<sup>1</sup> In the proper sense of the word it was not a persecution, but a simple outburst of selfish craft and demoniacal cruelty. It had no reference to Christians as such, but only to Christians as despised and hated by the mob for reasons which the mob would have been wholly unable to explain. It was short-lived in the extreme; and no sooner was it over than things returned to their former state. Few things are more improbable than that local circumstances of a duration and a range so limited were all that occupied the mind of the Seer of Patmos when he wrote his Apocalypse. The general strain of his language seems rather to show that he was thinking of persecution on a wider scale, and that his mind was excited by far more momentous events.

In particular it is worthy of notice that there are traces in the Apocalypse of persecutions having now assumed a settled form—and being conducted by the

<sup>1</sup> The works of Aubé, Keim, and Overbeck show clearly how mistaken Lücke is when he speaks of the persecution under Nero as the beginning of a long series of

tyrannical oppressions becoming continually more merciless and more general on the part of the Roman government towards Christians.—*Versuch*, p. 437.



civil authorities of the day, as when the church at Smyrna is exhorted, "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold the devil is about to cast some of you *into prison*." <sup>1</sup> We are even reminded by Holtzmann, following Weizäcker, that the well-known persecutions of Christians under Trajan, of which so conspicuous an illustration is afforded in Pliny's letter to that Emperor, had "without doubt" reached their full development under Domitian.<sup>2</sup> By that time too, though hardly much sooner, the state had come to recognise the difference between the Jews and Christians, a recognition disastrous to the latter. Jews were rather favoured than persecuted by the Roman Government. They had indeed at an earlier date been expelled from Rome by Claudius; <sup>3</sup> but, when St. Paul, A.D. 60, visited the imperial city, they appear to have been pursuing their ordinary avocations and living in peace.<sup>4</sup> Several years later, at least as late as the end of Nero's reign, this would seem to have been still their fortune, until the ever-widening gulf between them and Christians both opened the eyes of the Government to the fact that the two classes were not the same, and made Christians, whose thoughts were more occupied with another world than those of Jews, peculiarly obnoxious to it; and this again led the Jews, probably also now embittered by the fall of Jerusalem, to do their best to confirm the impression, by encouraging the persecutions that were on foot.<sup>5</sup> Till then, however, Chris-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Einleitung*, p. 419.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xviii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxviii. 20-22.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. ii. 9.

tians had had no occasion to regard the power of Rome either with hatred or disaffection. In his second Epistle to the Thessalonians St. Paul sees in what almost all, if not all, commentators regard as the Roman power, a power which hindered the outbreak of satanic violence which was supposed to be at hand.<sup>1</sup> At a later date, in his Epistle to the Romans, the same Apostle uses language in regard to the civil magistrate which he could never have employed had he seen in him the representative of the "beast";<sup>2</sup> and in his first Epistle to Timothy, instead of denouncing the governing powers, he exhorts "first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in high place."<sup>3</sup> The persecution spoken of in the Apocalypse at the hands of the Roman power, and the terrible light in which that power then presented itself to the Christian mind, thus find their explanation at a later date than the destruction of Jerusalem, so that Pfleiderer, referring to the notices of them contained in the Epistles to the Seven Churches (though the same observation may be extended to the rest of the book), is led to say, "It is scarcely possible that there was such wide-spread persecution in the churches of Asia Minor before the time of Trajan, certainly not before that of Domitian."<sup>4</sup>

4. The relation of the Apocalypse to the fourth Gospel tends to establish the same conclusion. That

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii. 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xiii. 1-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Urchristenthum*, p. 323.

Comp. Appendix, note.

Gospel cannot be placed earlier than towards the close of St. John's life, and we have already seen<sup>1</sup> how dependent the two books are upon one another in their structure. The problem to be solved then is, which came first? When we look at them in their order of thought there can be no hesitation as to the answer. The Gospel came first. But the order of thought may not be the same as that of writing or publication. A man may have a subject long in his mind—perhaps, as it would be necessary to think in the case before us, thirty years—before he summons courage to present it to the world in a book. In the meantime he may write what, though founded upon that subject, seems to be more urgently demanded by the position which he occupies or by the force of surrounding circumstances; and the last years of life may come upon him before he returns to his first love. In such a case the inquirer of a distant age would obviously be wrong in saying that, because the subject or thought of the last book preceded that of the first, the last must also have been the first to appear. Thus in the present instance the thought of the Apocalypse may have been founded on that of the Gospel, while the Gospel may have been last written or published. Yet the probabilities are surely all the other way. Let it once be granted that the key to the Apocalypse lies, where we have endeavoured to find it, in the Gospel of St. John, and it will not be easy to suppose that the former appeared more than thirty years before the latter.

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, ii.

The considerations now adduced may show that, generally entertained as the opinion is that the Apocalypse dates from the period immediately preceding the fall of Jerusalem, there is not a little that may lead us to the conclusion, which alone has the tradition of the Church in its favour, that it belongs to the reign of Domitian. More than this it would be improper to assert. It is not easy to set aside the almost unanimous verdict of modern critical inquiry; and no presumptuous claim is here made to do so. But that verdict is not to be, on the other hand, too submissively acknowledged, and this the more when we bear in mind that it is closely connected with a system of interpretation which destroys the canonical validity of the book, and is thus at variance with a conclusion of the universal Church reached through many struggles and firmly maintained through many centuries. In a matter of the kind, bearing with it consequences of a far-reaching character, no one ought to be condemned simply because he does not call others master.

It is important to observe, however, that modern scholarship begins to show signs that it is not so unanimous as it has been supposed to be. In his recently-published *Introduction to the New Testament*,<sup>1</sup> as well as in the *Prolegomena* to his commentary on the Apocalypse in the *Hand-Commentar* (1891), Holtzmann has devoted an elaborate inquiry to this question of date. He sees first of all much to lead him to

<sup>1</sup> 1892, p. 414, etc.

assign the book to a period after the death of Nero (June A.D. 68) but before the destruction of Jerusalem (September A.D. 70), and he must thus in the first instance fix either upon the time of Galba, who reigned from June, 68, to January, 69; or, passing him over along with Otho and Vitellius, upon that of Vespasian, who assumed the purple in December 69. The first of these suppositions, however, cannot well be entertained, because the three, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius must thus be treated as "horns," and this is forbidden by chap. xvii. 12. The natural inference therefore is, that we must assign the book to the time of Vespasian. Yet here again difficulties meet us, for in ver. 10 of the same chapter we read "The other is not yet come; and, when he cometh, he must continue a little while;" and about the year 69-70 it was impossible to know whether the empire would recover itself, or whether the reign of Vespasian would be long or short. In these circumstances Holtzmann is led to the conclusion that escape from the difficulties of our present text is only to be found in the idea that the story then in circulation regarding the returning Nero led to such a modification of the text as should make it applicable not to the original Nero but to the pretender who had been playing his part. Nero, it was known, had not returned, but about the *end* of the reign of Vespasian, this pseudo-Nero had appeared upon the scene, obtained recognition among the Parthians, marched against Rome, been defeated, and had finally surrendered to Domitian in the year 88.

Domitian thus becomes the eighth "head," at once a supernumerary to, and on an equal level with, the seven previous heads. Nor is this forbidden by the apparently prophetic words of ver. 11 regarding the "little while," for these words are not prophetic. They refer not to any predicted murder of Domitian, but only to that destruction which a good man believes will certainly and speedily overtake the godless. In all this Holtzmann follows Pfeleiderer, who again seems to have followed a hint due to Weizäcker. It may be well to give Pfeleiderer's own words, which are as follows: "We are driven therefore to suppose that ver. 11 was added in the time of Domitian when it was seen that Nero did not return, but that another emperor, who in character and conduct might well be regarded by Christians as a second Nero, had assumed the throne."<sup>1</sup> There is thus what Holtzmann speaks of as a "doppelter Zeithintergrund" before us, the date of the original Apocalypse being A.D. 69, in the time of Vespasian, its date in its later form belonging to the time of Domitian or after him, when chap. xvii. 11 had been added to the text in order to connect the idea of the "beast" with a Nero, though a second Nero, facts having now made it impossible to think any longer of the first tyrant of that name.

The purport of this reasoning is, that the supposition of a date for the Apocalypse, *as we now have it*, before the destruction of Jerusalem, cannot be maintained. With its present text it points, not to the

<sup>1</sup> *Urchristenthum*, pp. 335, 339.

time of Vespasian but to that of Domitian, or even later. Yet it will surely be admitted by most men that the method thus resorted to for getting rid of a difficulty, by introducing a charge of interpolation of the text where there is not the slightest proof otherwise that there was anything of the kind, is highly unsatisfactory. The passage may be otherwise explained;<sup>1</sup> and we are fully entitled to demand of interpreters that they shall not too readily abandon the attempt to interpret it as it is. This demand being granted, one conclusion alone remains—that the language of several of the most distinguished critics of the present day marks a turn of the tide with regard to the date of the Apocalypse, while at the same time it supports the conclusion that it belongs, in conformity with the tradition of the Church, to the time of Domitian, and not to the time of either Galba or Vespasian.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the author's *Commentary on Revelation, in loc.* and comp. Hengstenberg, *in loc.*

<sup>2</sup> In addition to what has been said above, it may be mentioned that Harnack confesses his inability to settle the question as to date, except on the supposition of successive revisions of the book (REVELATION, in *Encycl. Brit.* p. 886). Spitta also is decided in his conclusion that, in the form in which we now have it, the book belongs to a date between the time of Trajan as the *terminus ad quem* and that of Domitian as the *terminus a quo* (*u.s.* p. 528, etc.) Once more, Weizäcker, while satisfied that chap. xi. 1, etc., must

be referred to a date prior to the destruction of the Temple, seems almost to think that this may be the only part that can be so spoken of. He accepts as "without doubt correct" the belief that the writer was banished to Patmos in the time of Domitian; and is at the same time of opinion, that "the general colouring, the spirit, the view taken of the surrounding world, in short the atmosphere in which the book moves," belong to a date about thirty years later than the fall of Jerusalem (*Ap. Z.* p. 510).

The question thus again resolves itself into the inquiry whether, so far as concerns chap. xvii. (but

the spirit of the remark applies also to chap. xi. and other passages), we are entitled to extrude from the text words which all external evidence places there, and which, so far as internal evidence goes, are in *strictest harmony* with the method of reckoning that a Jew, to whom the 8th of a series had a special meaning, would naturally adopt. We might quite as reasonably strike out the words  $\tau\eta\ \mu\epsilon\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta$  in John vii. 37. It may be added

that the true conclusion to which the difficulties in which the critics spoken of find themselves involved should lead is, that their interpretation of chaps. xi. and xvii. is false.

In his recent work on *The Early Religion of Israel*, Professor Robertson has well said, "When difficulties increase at every step of a hypothesis, it is time to inquire whether the hypothesis itself is not at fault" (p. 8).



## DISCUSSION IV

### THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE APOCALYPSE

IN entering upon the discussion of this question it seems unnecessary to enumerate at length the various testimonies of the early Church to the authorship of the Apocalypse by the Apostle John. These will be found gathered together in many books which are easily accessible, and of which the following may be named ;—Alford's "Prolegomena," in the last volume of his *Commentary on the New Testament* ; Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament* ; Westcott on the *Canon of the New Testament ; Canonicity*, by Dr. Charteris ; Archdeacon Lee's *Introduction to his Commentary on the Revelation* ; and Gloag's *Introduction to the Johannine Writings*. Numerous works of continental scholars containing similar summaries of the facts may also for the present be omitted. It is the less necessary to do more than mention the above, because it is well known that there is no book of the New Testament the reputed authorship of which is more generally, or in stronger terms, allowed by inquirers of all schools of thought, and not least by the chief members of that school of negative criticism which is

so often found opposed to the traditions of the Church. Thus it is that Baur has expressed his opinion that few writings of the New Testament can claim evidence for an apostolic authorship of a kind so ancient and undoubted.<sup>1</sup> Zeller follows in his master's steps with the declaration that the Apocalypse is the real and normal writing of early Christianity, and that among all the books of the New Testament it is the only one which, with a certain measure of right, may claim to have been composed by an Apostle and immediate disciple of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Schwegler<sup>3</sup> and Hilgenfeld<sup>4</sup> bear similar testimony to the authenticity of the book; while, in our own country, Dr. Davidson thus speaks, "Enough has been given to prove that the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse is as well attested as that of any other book of the New Testament. . . . With the limited stock of early ecclesiastical literature that survives the wreck of time, we should despair of proving the authenticity of any New Testament book by the help of ancient witnesses if that of the Apocalypse be rejected."<sup>5</sup> Having such testimonies in our hands, further argument might almost be dispensed with. Yet some parts of the evidence are in themselves so interesting that it would be improper to omit them.

This remark may be particularly applied to the evidence of Papias, who is said by Eusebius to have

<sup>1</sup> *Die K. Ev.* p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> *T. J.* 1842, p. 654.

<sup>3</sup> *N. Z.* ii. p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> *E. in d. N. T.* p. 448, etc.

<sup>5</sup> *Intr. to N. T.* i. p. 318.

spoken in his book concerning the "Oracles of the Lord" of a corporeal reign of Christ upon the earth for a thousand years after the resurrection from the dead.<sup>1</sup> It is not indeed stated in this passage that the opinion referred to was taken from the Apocalypse, and Papias may have adopted it from some other source. But the probability that he is speaking upon the authority of St. John is in no small degree confirmed by the fact that Andreas and Arethas, two Bishops of Cæsarea, in the second half of the fifth century, when the work of Papias, now lost, was still in circulation, distinctly say—the one, that Papias regarded the Apocalypse as worthy of trust; the other, that he had the book before him.<sup>2</sup> No doubt indeed would probably have been entertained upon the point had not Eusebius, contrary to his custom, failed to tell us that Papias had the Apocalypse in his eye; and had he not raised the question whether the "Presbyter John," with whom Papias had conversed, might not be a different person from the Apostle. The first of these difficulties is easily removed when we remember that Eusebius, a keen anti-millenarian, and one who speaks with contempt of Papias for his millenarian proclivities, must have been most unwilling to connect such opinions with a sacred book, and that he was even doubtful whether the Apocalypse ought to be regarded in this light. The second difficulty again would at once disappear were it allowed, as there seems every reason to think is the case, that the Apostle and the

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.* iii. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Canonicity*, pp. 338, 339.

✕ “Presbyter” are identical. But, even if this cannot be spoken of as established, it is worthy of notice that in another work Eusebius couples the names of Papias and Polycarp of Smyrna together as acknowledged hearers of the Apostle.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion is strengthened by the date of Papias’s birth, not later than A.D. 70, and by the scene of his ministry, at no great distance from Ephesus.

✕ Omitting many intervening authorities, we pass to another interesting testimony connected with these early times, that of Irenæus. No one disputes the acquaintance of this Father with the Apocalypse, or that he distinctly ascribes it to St. John. The point of importance is that, as we learn from his beautiful letter to Florinus,<sup>2</sup> he had been a disciple of Polycarp, who in his turn had been a disciple of St. John, and that he delighted in after life to call to mind the accounts which his teacher used to give of his intercourse with the Apostle; an intercourse so truly transmitted to his pupils that Irenæus, in describing it, speaks with obvious artlessness, not of eye-witnesses of Jesus, but of “eye-witnesses of the life of the Word.”

Testimonies such as these are of the highest value, but the Fathers who have left them are supported by many others. Without passing beyond the first half of the third century we name only Justin Martyr, Dionysius of Corinth, Melito of Sardis, Polycrates of

<sup>1</sup> *Chron. Bipart.*, quoted in the *Speaker's Commentary on the New Test.* iv, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> Stieren's *Irenæus*, i. p. 822.

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Ephesus, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, in the East; and in the West, Tertullian, Cyprian, the letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, the old Latin version of the New Testament, and the document known as the Muratorian Fragment. It is needless to enlarge. External evidence of a more satisfactory and convincing nature could not be desired. One or two circumstances worthy of notice add to its importance. X

In the first place, there is a singularly close connexion between the sources of no small portion of the evidence and the district in which the Apostle laboured. Papias was Bishop of Hierapolis; Polycarp, so intimately associated with Irenæus, was Bishop of Smyrna; Irenæus belonged to Asia Minor; Melito was Bishop of Sardis; Polycrates was Bishop of Ephesus; and Justin Martyr wrote at Ephesus. In the second place, some of the men to whom we owe these testimonies gave them under conditions peculiarly favourable to their knowledge of the facts. Justin Martyr, the earliest and most important, was not only possessed of singular ability and an inquiring mind, but had travelled over most of the then known world, enjoying in this way the most ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the convictions of the Church. Irenæus discusses the famous reading in Rev. xiii. 18; and, in doing so, refers to "all the good and *ancient* copies," as well as to the "attestation to the received reading, of those who had themselves seen John face to face." Origen, the extent of whose X

scholarship and the acuteness of whose criticism would have distinguished the most enlightened ages of the Church, came to his conclusion in spite of all his prejudice against that chiliasm which the Apocalypse appeared to favour. In the third place, it would seem as if we had in no case cited by us to deal only with individual opinion. It is upon the tradition of the Church that our witnesses rest their conclusion, thus taking us back to a period much more remote than their own, and to those historical authentications of what they say which, though since lost, existed in their time, and were relied on by them.

Internal evidence confirms the conclusion drawn from the external. The most important parts of it, indeed, like so many other points connected with our subject, will find a more appropriate place in a subsequent Discussion.<sup>1</sup> But one point claims attention now. (Both in the opening and closing verses of the book the writer calls himself John,<sup>2</sup> telling us at the same time that he was "in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> Who could this John be but the Apostle? He speaks to the churches of Asia as possessed of authority which none can question: antiquity knows of but one John to whom such a position may be assigned. He had been banished to Patmos (the only natural interpretation of his words) for the cause of Christ; antiquity speaks only of one of his name who had experienced such a fate. An attempt has indeed

<sup>1</sup> Discussion V.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. i. 1, 4, 9; xxii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. i. 9.

been often made to show that a conjecture of Dionysius,<sup>1</sup> the probability of which is hesitatingly allowed by Eusebius,<sup>2</sup> may be well founded, and that the "John" of the Apocalypse may have been the person known as "John the Presbyter."<sup>3</sup> The probability, however, is that no such person as John the Presbyter ever existed.<sup>4</sup> Even if he did exist, he cannot have occupied the place in the estimation of the Church which belongs to the author of the Apocalypse, or we should have known more about him; nor do we meet anywhere with the slightest hint of his banishment to Patmos. The attempt, therefore, to fix upon him as the author of the Apocalypse is vain; and, so far as we may judge from the general tone of the most recent literature upon that book, it seems to have been abandoned. Besides him there is no other John who can be for an instant thought of. Upon the assertion that some one may have written it who pretended to be the Apostle<sup>5</sup> it is unnecessary to dwell. The supposition is as destitute of probability as of proof.

To the conclusion naturally following from the above testimonies various objections have been urged. The most formidable of these are drawn from a comparison between the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel,

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.* vii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> iii. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Düsterdieck, *Einl.* § 4; comp. Bleek, *Intr. to N. T.* ii. p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> See the author's paper in *Kitto's Journal*, Oct. 1867; and

comp. Riggenbach, *Die Zeugnisse f. d. E. Joh.*; Steitz, in *Herzog's R. Encycl.*; Füller, *Die Offenbarung Joh.* p. 703.

<sup>5</sup> See Bleek's *Intr. to N. T.*, ii. p. 201.

not a few of the most distinguished supporters of the Johannine origin of the Gospel being of opinion that its difference from the Apocalypse is in many respects so great as to render it impossible to ascribe both to a common authorship. To this point, which may be considered the kernel of the whole question, and for the discussion of which it is desirable to reserve as much space as possible, we shall immediately proceed. In the meantime one or two other objections, having no relation to this comparison, call for notice.

These objections resolve themselves into the statement that the voice of antiquity is not unanimous in favour of the Johannine origin of the Apocalypse, and more particularly that distinct evidence of an opposite kind is borne by Caius, usually designated as a Roman presbyter, by the sect known as the Alogi, and by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, in the third century.

1. That of Caius. In Eusebius<sup>1</sup> we meet the following words, "About the same time, we have understood, appeared Cerinthus, the leader of another heresy. Caius, whose words are quoted above in 'The Disputation' attributed to him, writes thus respecting him: 'But Cerinthus, by means of revelations which he pretended were written by a great Apostle, also falsely pretended to wonderful things, as if they were shown him by angels, asserting that, after the resurrection, there would be an earthly kingdom of Christ, and that the flesh, *i.e.* men, again inhabiting Jerusalem, would be subject to desires and pleasures.'

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.* iii. 28.



Being also an enemy to the Divine Scriptures, with a view to deceive men he said 'that there would be a space of a thousand years for celebrating nuptial festivals.' " These words of Caius, it is alleged, refer to the Apocalypse, and prove that he regarded it as a forgery of Cerinthus ; while Dionysius of Alexandria must have had Caius and his statement, so interpreted, in his mind when speaking of the revelation of St. John, he says, "*Some indeed before us* have set aside, and have attempted to refute, the whole book, criticising every chapter, and pronouncing it without sense and without reason. They say it has a false title, for it is not of John, . . . but that Cerinthus, the founder of the sect of the Cerinthians, so called from him, wishing to have reputable authority for his own fiction, prefixed the title."<sup>1</sup> Both conclusions are obviously hasty. The words of Dionysius, "some before us," can hardly refer to Caius, for the description given of the efforts of these persons in the passage quoted by Eusebius has little or no resemblance to what, as we learn from the same historian, Caius must have written. Dionysius speaks of persons who attempted to refute the whole book of Revelation, criticising every chapter, a thing which Caius could not have done in a work which was simply a dialogue or disputation against a certain Proclus in connexion with the heresy of Montanism.<sup>2</sup> It is true, no doubt, that in that "Disputation" the books of Scripture were referred to, but not in the manner described

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.* vii. 25.    <sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.* ii. 25 ; iii. 31 ; vi. 20.

by Dionysius. The probability, therefore, is that the Bishop of Alexandria is not alluding to Caius, but to other persons who rejected the Revelation of St. John and ascribed it to Cerinthus.

Again, it is by no means clear that the "pretended revelations of a great Apostle" spoken of by Caius is the Revelation of St. John. As justly noted by Lardner<sup>1</sup> St. John, or whoever was the author of the book, does not expressly give himself the title of Apostle. He simply calls himself "John." Why then should Caius speak of Cerinthus as claiming to give the revelations of "a great Apostle" instead of pretending to give those of John? The description, too, of the contents of Cerinthus's work does not apply to our canonical book, and has a much closer affinity to some of those apocryphal *apocalypses* of which so many were in circulation in the early Christian Church. There is more ground to think that Caius refers to a book written by Cerinthus himself, in which he claimed to have had visions; and this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Cerinthus is distinctly said by Theodoret to have "feigned certain visions which he professed to have seen,"<sup>2</sup> and the contents of which were from Jewish sources.<sup>3</sup> Still further it is in the highest degree improbable that Caius could have had the Apocalypse of St. John in his eye when he used the language ascribed to him by Eusebius. For when he wrote at the

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, ii. p. 402.

<sup>3</sup> Smith's *Dict. of Christ.*

<sup>2</sup> *Speaker's Comm. N.T.* iv. p. 439, note 3. *Biogr.* i. p. 449.

beginning of the third century the Apocalypse was accepted in the Roman Church, to which he belonged, as the work of St. John, and in that Church Caius appears to have been held in high estimation for his learning and prudence. He is described by Eusebius as *λογιώτατος*.<sup>1</sup> To these considerations may be added the statement of Dr. Westcott when he says, "I may express my decided belief that Caius is not speaking of the Apocalypse of St. John, but of books written by Cerinthus in imitation of it. The theology of the Apocalypse is wholly inconsistent with what we know of Cerinthus's views on the person of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The whole controversy regarding Caius would at once be brought to a termination could we adopt the conjecture of the late Bishop of Durham, Dr. Lightfoot, that the controversy against Proclus was conducted not by Caius, but by Hippolytus, whose first name was Caius, and that the "Disputation" containing the account of it was written by him.<sup>3</sup> In that case it would be utterly impossible to refer the description given as that of Caius to the work of St. John, for the views of Hippolytus on the Apocalypse are well known. He not only admired and constantly referred to it, but he wrote a work entitled "A Defence of the Apocalypse and Gospel of the Apostle and Evangelist John."<sup>4</sup> Apart from this, however, and allowing the existence of Caius as a person dis-

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.* vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *On the Canon*, p. 307, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of Philology*, i. p. 98;

Smith's *Dict. of Christ. Biogr.*

i. p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> Smith's *Dict. u.s.* iii. p. 99.

tinct from Hippolytus, there is no reason to think that the authority of the Apocalypse was opposed by one in the important position of the Roman Presbyter. Dionysius has probably in view persons whose difficulties rested mainly, if not wholly, on the strange and enigmatical character of the book. Nay, even if we admit that the words of Dionysius, "*some before us,*" are to be understood of Caius, they are of much less weight than is generally attributed to them. *Caius belonged to Dionysius's own time.*<sup>1</sup> He wrote in the beginning of the third century: Dionysius was born in the last decade of the second, and was an already ordained presbyter in A.D. 233.<sup>2</sup> The two men must have been of very nearly the same age. Thus the words "*some before us,*" even when understood of Caius, take us back to no remote point in the history of the Church, and indicate no broken tradition with regard to the Apocalypse at a date much anterior to the days of Dionysius himself.

2. From Caius we may pass to those known as the Alogi. Lardner indeed doubts whether such a sect ever existed, so slight and confused are the notices regarding it that have come down to us.<sup>3</sup> Our information regarding them rests mainly on the accounts of Epiphanius,<sup>4</sup> who himself, after a fashion

<sup>1</sup> If the Caius referred to in the letter of Dionysius to Domitian and Didymus be the Caius of whom we speak, then Dionysius describes him as a contemporary and companion in suffering (Eusebius, *H. E.* vii. 11). This, how-

ever, may be another Caius; the name was a common one.

<sup>2</sup> Smith's *Dict. of Christ. Biogr.* i. pp. 384, 850.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, viii. p. 629

<sup>4</sup> lib. 1. 1, 3.

not confined to this single instance, invented the name by which they are known, intending to describe by it both their opposition to the idea that Jesus was the Divine *Logos*, or Word of God, and the unreasonableness of their views. They belong to the last quarter of the second century, and seem to have been persons marked by strong opposition to the chiliasm of the time. The fact that they rejected not only the Apocalypse, but also the fourth Gospel, ascribing both to the heretic Cerinthus, is of itself a proof that they were incapable of conducting critical investigations.<sup>1</sup> No one would dream for a moment of accepting their conclusion upon the latter point; and their opposition to the Johannine origin of the Apocalypse is thus materially weakened. It proceeded wholly upon internal grounds, and was in no degree supported by that reference to history, or that tradition of the Church, which is alone of weight for the present stage of our inquiry. The nature of the opposition, however, offered to the Apocalypse by the Alogi throws light upon two important points connected with our subject. It implies a recognition by the Church of both the Gospel and the Apocalypse about A.D. 170, and an acknowledgment of the unity of the authorship of the two books.

3. We have still to speak of Dionysius of Alexandria. Great interest has always been taken in the statements

<sup>1</sup> Comp. the strong language of Weiss in regard to "the complete unfitness" of the Alogi to judge upon the point, in his *Einleitung*, p. 360, note.

of this Father, who flourished in the first half of the second century, and much importance has been justly attached to them. They are given at considerable length by Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> and they indicate an ingenuousness, sobriety, and critical discernment worthy of one of the most distinguished pupils of the illustrious Origen. The general opinion of Dionysius on the Apocalypse is expressed in the following words: "Having formed a conception of the subject of the Apocalypse as exceeding my capacity, I consider it also as containing a certain concealed and wonderful intimation in each particular. For, though I do not understand, yet I suspect that some deeper sense is enveloped in the words, and these I do not measure and judge by my private reason; but, allowing more to faith, I have regarded them as too lofty to be comprehended by me, and those things which I do not understand I do not reject, but I wonder the more that I cannot comprehend."

Regarding the Apocalypse in this light, Dionysius did not hesitate *to quote it as Scripture*;<sup>2</sup> nor did he "venture," he tells us, "to set it aside, as there were many brethren who valued it much."<sup>3</sup> He agrees that it was "the work of some holy and inspired man," and he did "not deny that the author saw a revelation, and received knowledge and prophecy." His doubts centre wholly on the composition of the book by the Apostle John. With this idea he could "not easily agree," and he was of opinion

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.* vii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.* vii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vii. 25.

that it was most probably the work of a second Ephesian John (the first being the beloved disciple) whose tomb he had heard ("they say") was shown at Ephesus. This John was the person known as "the Presbyter," the tradition regarding whose grave has been preserved by Eusebius.<sup>1</sup> Had it not been for the fact that the John Mark of the Acts of the Apostles seemed to have had no connexion with Asia, Dionysius would obviously have been more inclined to associate the authorship of the Apocalypse with him. In speaking thus he distinctly rejects that part of the tradition of "some before us" (to which so much importance has been attached), which would imply that the book was the composition of Cerinthus, and that it had "a false title,—for it was not of John."

What concerns us most, however, is the ground upon which Dionysius rested his conclusion. It is remarkable that he anticipates to a large extent the more recent criticism of those who, holding the Johanne origin of the Gospel, deny a similar origin to the Apocalypse. The consideration of his difficulties may therefore be postponed, and, in the meantime, it is enough to say that, so far from indicating any interrupted tradition of the Church upon the point, Dionysius is a most important witness to its continuity. He obviously feels that he is arguing, not in favour of a disputed opinion where on either side there was an almost equal balance of authority, but

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.* iii. 39.

against the *general tradition* of his time. He is opposing himself to *the Church*; and hence in no small degree the care, the hesitation, and the modesty with which he states his views. The point to be chiefly noticed in connexion with these views is, that they were wholly the result of *internal* considerations. There is not one word of appeal to any external authority thought worthy of regard. Dionysius finds it difficult to reconcile the language, the style, and the dogmatic contents of the book with what we otherwise know of the writings of St. John; and, because of this, he resorts to a theory which he seems to have been the first to broach, that the author must have been another John than the Apostle. The opinion thus expressed had little or no influence even upon the Alexandrine Church.<sup>1</sup>

Here, therefore, we are entitled to pause. So far as the external and much at least of the internal evidence goes, only one conclusion can be drawn, that the Apocalypse is either the work of the Evangelist and Apostle, or that we have no means whatever of identifying the author. In the latter case the book would occupy a position in the Canon similar to that of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

One other point ought to be noticed. An attempt has been made by several recent writers, most elaborately by Keim,<sup>2</sup> to show that St. John cannot be the author of the Apocalypse, because he had never

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *On the Canon*, p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> *J. v. N. i.* p. 217, etc.; comp.

Holtzmann in Schenkel's *B.-L.*

iii. p. 332; Schenkel, *Ch. Bild.*



any connexion either with Ephesus or with Asia Minor, and because in fact he, as well as all the other Apostles, had died before the destruction of Jerusalem. Could the premiss be established the conclusion would almost inevitably follow. So intimately is the book associated with the churches of Asia, so directly do the Fathers who ascribe it to the Apostle ascribe it to him in his supposed connexion with that district, that, if no such connexion existed, the whole tradition of the early Christian Church respecting St. John as the writer of the Apocalypse must be set aside as unworthy of reliance. A few words, therefore, upon this latest phase of the controversy seem to be required.

The texts relied on to prove the death of St. John before the destruction of Jerusalem are Luke ix. 49 etc., 51, etc.; Mark iii. 17; ix. 38, etc.; to which are added, as showing that all the Apostles were dead before the Apocalypse was written, Rev. xviii. 20; xxi. 14. We can only recommend our readers to compare these texts with the conclusions drawn from them, that they may judge for themselves how flimsy are the foundations upon which not a little of that modern criticism rests which is so confidently urged on our acceptance. The argument against any connexion between St. John and Ephesus is more elaborate. It depends partly upon the statement that there is no mention of such a connexion in several of those

early documents in which we might naturally have looked for it, and partly on the endeavour to prove that Irenæus, our chief authority upon the point, was led "under the combined influences of misunderstanding and of the necessities of the time" to confound the "Presbyter John," of whom we have already spoken, with the far more important John the Apostle. Of the former, not the latter, had Irenæus, while yet a boy, heard many memorable things from Polycarp: the former, not the latter, had been the "Lord's disciple," had succeeded to the sphere of St. Paul's labours in Asia Minor, had lived in Ephesus, had written the Revelation and the Gospel, and had died at a very great age in the reign of the Emperor Trajan. To all this has to be added that, according to a recently-discovered passage of the lost work of Papias,<sup>1</sup> the Apostle John was put to death by the Jews, that is, in Palestine, not at Ephesus. From these circumstances the conclusion is drawn that the whole story with regard to the Apostle's having spent the last years of his life in Ephesus is mythical. It sprang up in Asia Minor late in the second century from the desire, everywhere experienced, to possess Apostles as channels of the pure tradition in opposition to Gnosticism, and it was aided in its growth by the fact that there had been a John at Ephesus whom it was easy to confound with the Apostle. But

<sup>1</sup> Nolte, *Theologische Quartal-schrift*, forty-fourth year, p. 466, in Schenkel's *B.-L.* iii. 333,

Παπίας ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ λόγῳ τῶν κυριακῶν λογίων φάσκει, ὅτι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων ἀνηρέθη.

in reality the Apostle never was in Asia; and it is thus impossible that the Apocalypse can be his work.

The argument cannot be accepted as either conclusive or satisfactory. The first part of it obviously proves nothing. We have no right to fix beforehand what a writer is bound to say; and, if we are to reject statements of antiquity as false, because in the scanty remains of early ecclesiastical literature that have reached us fragments are found which do not mention them, even when it would have been natural to do so, we shall have little left us to believe. Hilgenfeld calls attention to the fact that Papias makes no mention of St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> The documents referred to are also silent, not only as to the Apostle's connexion with Ephesus, but as to his existence, and to that silence surely no importance is to be attached. As to Ignatius, again, whose silence in his Epistle to the Ephesians is thought so particularly inexplicable, it is to be observed (1) that in chap. xi. he speaks not of St. Paul only, but of the *Apostles* with whom they had companied or been in accord, and that in the number thus referred to St. John may have been included; (2) that if in chap. xii. he does not couple the name of St. John with that of St. Paul, it is because it was not suitable to his purpose. "Ignatius is speaking of the relations of the Ephesians with martyrs. John died peaceably in extreme old age at Ephesus."<sup>2</sup> Besides this, "the life of St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> *Eiul.* p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. ii. sect. i. p. 64.

had a peculiar attraction for Ignatius, owing to the similarity of their outward circumstances."<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered, too, that St. Paul, not St. John, had founded the Church at Ephesus; and everything that has come down to us from Christian antiquity bears witness to the importance universally attached to such a fact. There was no need, for the sake of apostolical sanction, to connect the Ephesian Church with St. John; it was already connected with St. Paul. Nor is this even all that may be said. The force of the argument from the silence of Ignatius depends upon the assertion that the story with regard to the Apostle's residence at Ephesus sprang up about the time of the publication of the fourth Gospel. Those therefore who place the publication of that Gospel in the middle, or beyond the middle of the second century, may take advantage of the silence in question, and may say that it is best explained by the circumstance that there was as yet no tradition of the kind. But Keim's own conclusions as to the date of the Gospel close this refuge against him. Before the letter of Ignatius was written the Gospel had appeared.<sup>2</sup> The fable, supposing for the moment that it was only a fable, had sprung up. Ignatius must have known it. Yet he says nothing on the point. His silence must in

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. ii. sect. i. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> If, as seems to be generally agreed on, Ignatius was martyred during the persecution by Trajan, it could hardly have been before

A.D. 110 or A.D. 112. The latter is the date of Pliny's letter to Trajan (Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. i. p. 56). The letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians was written only a very few weeks before his martyrdom.

consequence be attributed to other causes than such ignorance of the fact as may be employed to prove that the fact had no existence.

Again, Keim's theory compels us to suppose that Irenæus, in speaking as he does in his letter to Florinus of the intercourse of Polycarp with "John," was mistaken as to the John to whom Polycarp had referred, and had, without being aware of his error, substituted the Apostle for "the Presbyter." The words of the letter are themselves the best answer to such a supposition, "I saw thee," says Irenæus, "when I was yet a boy, in Lower Asia with Polycarp, faring prosperously in the royal palace and endeavouring to commend thyself to him. For I remember better the things that then took place than those that have happened in more recent years (inasmuch as the things which we learn while we are boys grow up with our minds themselves and become a part of them), so that I am able to name the very place in which the sainted Polycarp was wont to sit and hold discourse, his goings out and comings in, the manner of his life and his personal appearance, his discourses to the multitude, and the narratives he used to give of his intercourse with John and the others who had seen the Lord. At these times Polycarp would recall the words which they had spoken, and would describe what he had heard concerning the Lord and His miracles and His teaching from those who had been eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, all that he related being in agreement with the Scriptures.

These things through the goodness of God I was then in the habit of listening to with eagerness; I stored them up not on paper but in my heart; and from that time till now I am ever, through the grace of God, revolving them faithfully in my mind.”<sup>1</sup> Can any impartial person read that letter, and for a moment imagine that the writer had mistaken the John of whom Polycarp so loved to speak? Can there be here “a delusion which Irenæus disastrously transferred from his youth to his manhood?” and was Polycarp “not the disciple of the Apostle but of the other John the disciple of the Lord?”<sup>2</sup> We have but to read the letter, so simple, so definite, so loving in its recollections, so true in its statement both of the process and the explanation of the process by which the aged writer was able to revivify the days of his boyhood, in order to be satisfied that, in the absence of positive contradiction from other quarters, we have in that letter one of the most trustworthy documents of the early Christian age. Irenæus could not be mistaken as to these memories; and so clear is this that Scholten, supporting Keim in his general position, found it necessary to assail the genuineness of the letter.<sup>3</sup> In this undertaking he has, so far as we are aware, had no support; nor has the mistake thus attributed to Irenæus the slightest countenance from any writer of the Church

<sup>1</sup> See the letter in Stieren's *Irenæus*, i. 822.

<sup>2</sup> Keim i. pp. 221, 222.

<sup>3</sup> Smith's *Dict. of Christ. Biogr.* ii. p. 544.

during the first seventeen hundred years of her existence.

Still further, the theory now before us elevates into a great historical personage a presbyter of whom, if he ever existed, we know nothing but the name. Keim's theory forbids him to rest, as so many have done, in the supposition that there were two Johns at Ephesus, the one the Apostle, the other the Presbyter. He is compelled to get rid of the former altogether, and he does so by resolving him into the second bearer of the same name. His argument may be taken advantage of by those who, on the other hand, doubt the existence of the Presbyter, and are inclined to resolve him into the Apostle. But it is unnecessary to plead that point now. Enough that the effort to ascribe all that is said of "John" to one man, and that one man "the Presbyter," involves in it a series of improbabilities so great that in this part of his conclusion Keim appears to have no followers.

Lastly, the tradition with which Keim's theory is at variance is one of the earliest, most continuous, and best authenticated which the second century presents. Holtzmann allows that all the Church Fathers are at one upon the point.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the fact is not alluded to in the Acts of the Apostles or in the Epistles of St. Paul, because in all probability the Apostle's residence at Ephesus did not begin until these books were penned, but it is authenticated by a

<sup>1</sup> Schenkel, *B.-L.* iii. p. 332.

succession of ancient Christian writers, some of whom from their official position in that city, others from early or later connexion with it, had the best opportunities of being accurately informed, while all of them are our most reliable authorities for the general history of the time.<sup>1</sup> Such were Polycarp, Polycrates, Irenæus, Apollonius Presbyter of Ephesus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the historian Eusebius. Although, too, Scripture is silent upon the point, it is to be remembered that the false teaching directly condemned in the first Epistle of St. John is the heresy of Cerinthus, who taught in Asia Minor at the close of the first century, and who is placed by tradition in immediate connexion with the Apostle.<sup>2</sup> The relation between St. John and Ephesus is thus confirmed from another point of view. Little need be said of the recently-discovered passage of Papias, quoted on p. 166. But this much is evident, that there is no connexion between the statement that St. John was removed *ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων* and the inference that his death must have taken place in Palestine. Instead of this the words are *against* the supposition that the "Jews" spoken of are to be sought in Palestine. Had such been the author's meaning we should almost certainly have had the article before *Ἰουδαίων*. But he speaks simply of "Jews," and Jews in all their persecuting bigotry, as the martyrdom of Polycarp

<sup>1</sup> A long list of authorities for the tradition will be found in Archdeacon Lee's *Comm.* p. 428; in Renan, *L'Ant.* p. 207, note;

and in Hilgenfeld, *Einl.* p. 394, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Westcott, *Epp. of St. John, Introd.* p. xxxii.



bears witness, were nowhere more numerous than in Asia.<sup>1</sup>

If, however, the Apostle's residence at Ephesus cannot be got rid of, the effort to make the Presbyter the author of the Apocalypse becomes vain, as well as the still later theory that the Presbyter may be the real author of the book, although, following the example of the pseudepigraphists, he published it under the name of one greater and more honoured than himself. The remarks of Holtzmann upon both these points are of interest and value.<sup>2</sup> The improbability of both suppositions is forcibly pointed out by that critic; for how, upon the one hand, could the Presbyter, "in immediate proximity to the great Apostle," have ventured to address to the churches of Asia his exhortations, warnings, and threatenings as if he needed no greater authority than his own? while, on the other hand, if he wrote under the Apostle's name, his book is constructed in several important particulars upon a plan very different from that of those writers whom he is supposed to imitate. The whole question, therefore, according to Holtzmann, resolves itself into the alternative, "Either the Apostle John is the author of the Apocalypse, or he was never in Ephesus. . . . To the question, Where are we to find such a John who needed only to name himself in order to be understood and listened to, the answer

<sup>1</sup> Nolte himself thinks that the passage is probably corrupt, and that the reference in it applies to James, not John. Comp. also

Dr. Lightfoot in *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Hand-Commentar*, vol. iv. p. 274.

must be given, He is to be found in Ephesus." "Our concern, however," he concludes, "is not to draw a correct line of distinction between two eminent men who were both connected with that place, but to recognise the Ephesian John in the being and in the peculiar field of labour which history has assigned to him, and to leave him there." We are not bound by this oracular verdict to let the matter rest in the uncertainty which it betrays. But, fortified by other considerations, it may help to carry us to Ephesus, and to find there that John who alone, as an Apostle of the Lord, could have assumed, in addressing the churches of Asia, the tone by which our Apocalypse is marked.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holtzmann, in his recently-published *Einleitung* (1892), has devoted a long section to the question of the Ephesian John. Much of the evidence there adduced to prove that the John spoken of in connexion with Ephesus is the Presbyter, not the Apostle, has been already considered in the text, and it is unnecessary to repeat it here. But Holtzmann has also entered upon a new line by endeavouring to explain the simplicity and naturalness of the process by which after ages would be led to transfer to the Presbyter the glory belonging to the Apostle, and to believe that the latter, not the former, had been from the first associated with the history of the Ephesian church.

To this aspect of the question it may be well to devote a few words.

The transfiguration then of the Presbyter into the Apostle would rest, it is said, upon three pre-suppositions:—1. That the two Johns were different persons; 2. That both of them as "disciples of the Lord," and as such highly honoured, had been alive when Papias was a youth; 3. That one of them, the author of the Apocalypse, had laid the foundations of that chiliasm which had afterwards so strong a hold of the Asiatic Christians.

When, accordingly, at a later date, men would ask which of the two Johns filled the high position and did the work assigned to one of them at Ephesus, we might

From all that has been said it ought to be manifest that the arguments, so far as we have yet examined them, against the authorship of the Apocalypse by the Apostle John, possess no real weight. The most serious objections to this conclusion have indeed yet

expect that the personality of the Presbyter would be swallowed up in that of the Apostle; for—1. the word "Apostle" had come to be used in a wide sense, and was applied to others than the twelve and St. Paul; 2. the Presbyter was known as a "disciple of the Lord;" 3. there was a tendency, which Irenæus had shared, to run the two personalities into one, notwithstanding the fact that they had been kept separate by Papias. The conclusion to which these considerations lead is also supposed to be favoured by other circumstances: 1. the analogy of James, the brother of the Lord, who, not himself an Apostle, takes in the *Protevangelium Jacobi* and in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the position of James, the son of Zebedee; together with that of Philip the Evangelist, who becomes in like manner Philip the Apostle; 2. the intolerable confusion which must have been occasioned by the fact that two men of such great importance bore the same name; 3. the unity which would be introduced into the whole traditional history regarding John.

Under the influence of all these circumstances the Presbyter, whoever he may have been, was

gradually surrounded with the halo which really belonged to the Apostle, and was eventually understood to be no other than the Apostle himself.

In all this there is too much special pleading to carry conviction with it. The most important point is probably the analogies of James and Philip, but neither of these is thoroughly established. Only on the supposition that James the Less and James the brother of the Lord are the same person can it be said that the *Protevangelium Jacobi* makes James the Lord's brother an Apostle, and in that case he was one in his own right, and not by confusion with the son of Zebedee. The Gospel according to the Hebrews also does not confound James the Lord's brother with the son of Zebedee. The James spoken of in it is, there is no reason to doubt, the former not the latter (comp. the commentators on 1 Cor. xv. 7). As to Philip, again, the late Dr. Lightfoot has given conclusive reasons for believing that the person of that name connected with Hierapolis was the Apostle not the Evangelist (*Preface to Coloss.* p. 45), so that in his case also there is no room to think of transference.

to be considered. But at the same time the nature of these is so peculiar that, before entering upon them, we are justified in looking back upon the path that we have been treading, and in determining the exact

In addition to this it will be observed that throughout all this reasoning it is taken for granted that there is positive and historical ground for believing that the John settled at Ephesus was the only John there, that he was the Presbyter, and that his transformation into the Apostle was a gradual process, not disturbed by actual recollections of the Apostle's presence in the city and neighbourhood. Such is not the case. No tradition says that there was only one John in the Ephesian church. Let us agree to set aside as unproved the supposition that the Presbyter is the Apostle, and the very tradition which tells us of the existence of the former must be understood to tell us that there were *two* Johns. Had its information been that there was only one, Holtzmann's argument might have been of force in showing how easy it was for the Presbyter to pass into the Apostle. But, according to the facts, the Presbyter did not stand alone. He had another John by his side both in life and in the grave, and the second John has to be accounted for from the beginning as well as the first.

Yet further, it seems impossible to assign any good reason why the tradition which believed in

the two Johns should have dropped all thought of a Presbyter who had filled so distinguished a place both in literature and action, and should have transferred its homage to the Apostle alone. It could not be for the sake of connecting the name of an Apostle with the capital of Asia. That, as we know, had been already done. St. Paul had founded the church there, and no more was in this respect needed. It could not be that the church desired to think of the Apocalypse (unquestionably associated with Ephesus) as the composition of the Apostle rather than the Presbyter. The book was too strange to be thrust upon an Apostle without good proof that it was his; and, even after it came to be accepted as inspired, there was nothing in the position of the Presbyter to make it be thought that he was not a suitable vehicle for the Divine Spirit. It could not be that the standing of the Apostle John was so unique that a far greater glory would accrue to a church which could claim him as its patron than if it were left dependent upon smaller men. There seems little ground to believe that, at the date at which tradition was forming, the Apostle John stood out so sublime

point that we have reached. In doing this there can be no doubt that we have found all that kind of evidence upon which we are accustomed to rely in such matters presenting itself to us with a rare degree

and almost solitary a figure as he was in the third and following centuries. May we not err in transferring too much of the later ideas of the Church into the earlier period with which we are now specially concerned? We ought probably to bring it more distinctly before us than we are prone to do, that the fourth Gospel was not yet understood, that it was perhaps hardly even generally recognised as a historical document, that the authorship of the Apocalypse was a matter of doubt, and that St. John had not yet been glorified with the glory which afterwards surrounded his memory. May not our mistake upon this point explain the often noted omission of St. John's name in the letters of Ignatius, the place assigned him in the list of seven Apostles named by Papias—a list in which he stands sixth—and the fact that even Polycrates, when enumerating the "great lights of Asia" who had fallen asleep, brings him in after Philip? St. John indeed as an Apostle does not seem to have had that pre-eminence in the estimation of the early Church which would account for the gradual swallowing up in him of another who could be spoken of in almost equally high

terms. His pre-eminence belongs to a later date. Once more, there is no proof that the Church of these times was at all troubled by any confusion arising out of mention of the two Johns, or that the unity introduced into her thoughts by getting rid of one of them was felt to be of value. We may feel thus; but much that is dark now was clear then. Words had then a more distinct meaning; and hints, wholly or almost wholly lost on us, guided the men of these days to definite conclusions. Holtzmann evidently supposes that the Church of the second century was involved in all the critical perplexities of a theological faculty in a German university in the nineteenth, and that she was gradually led so to mould her traditions as to escape them. The supposition is baseless.

It would thus appear that there was no sufficient motive to substitute the Apostle for the Presbyter, and the singularly varied and unanimous tradition which connects the Apostle John with Asia and with Ephesus must be accepted. If this be allowed it follows, according to Holtzmann's own showing, that the Apostle, and not the Presbyter, must be the author of the Apocalypse.

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of unanimity and force. In every section of the Church, and from an unusually early period, one opinion as to the Johannine origin of the Apocalypse prevailed. There was in some quarters hesitation, even reluctance, to admit the fact, for the book was supposed to teach a chiliasm from which some of the most eminent of the Fathers of the Church recoiled. But that very hesitation and reluctance only add strength to the conclusion reached. Nor can it really be thought by any impartial inquirer that the two devices mainly relied on to weaken it,—the theory of the “Presbyter John” and the supposition that the Apostle never had any connexion with Ephesus,—are able to effect that end. The first is surrounded with a haze of uncertainty which, apart from all other considerations, renders it useless for its purpose. The second bears the marks of having been resorted to less for its own sake than because it promises to extinguish at one stroke the possibility of associating the Apostle with a writing which has, under any circumstances, the closest relation to the Ephesian Church. The whole momentum of the story, the whole weight of what so interested the Church that it became a tradition, rests upon the Apostle, not the Presbyter. There is much that may lead us to swallow up the personality of the latter in the former; there is nothing to justify our swallowing up that of the former in the latter. Either there were two Johns at Ephesus, and in that case the Apostle was one of them; or there was only one John, and he the Apostle.

Strong, however, as is the external evidence now considered for the authorship of the Apocalypse by St. John, internal evidence leading to an opposite conclusion may be stronger. That internal evidence, therefore, must be weighed before a verdict upon the whole case can be given.

## DISCUSSION V

### RELATION OF THE APOCALYPSE TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

HAVING in the previous discussion considered the question of the authorship of the Apocalypse, both on external and internal grounds, a writer on the subject would in ordinary circumstances have no more to say. But it so happens that, in the present instance, there is one branch of internal evidence which of itself prevents many from adopting the conclusion that the Apocalypse is the work of the Apostle John. That book and the fourth Gospel cannot, it is urged, have been written by the same hand. The writer of these pages has elsewhere declared and defended his belief in the Johannine origin of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> He has also now contended for the Johannine origin of the Apocalypse. Throughout the *Lectures* of his previous volume unity of authorship in the case of these two books was taken for granted and proceeded on. An effort must now be made to show that the two beliefs are not inconsistent with each other.

The confidence with which the statement, that

<sup>1</sup> *Comm.* vol. ii. Intr. to Gospel of St. John.



there is an irreconcilable difference between the two books before us, is made by many distinguished ornaments of the later criticism of the New Testament is very great, but it is unnecessary to give many quotations from their works. Two, often referred to with approbation both on the Continent and in England, may be enough. "In the criticism of the New Testament," says De Wette, "there is nothing established with such certainty as that the Apostle John cannot have written the Apocalypse if he be the author of the Gospel and Epistles, or that, if he be the author of the former, he cannot also be the author of the latter."<sup>1</sup> The same conclusion is otherwise expressed by Baur when he says: "The Evangelist's point of view is not merely different from that of the Seer, it is thoroughly opposed to it."<sup>2</sup>

I. How far, we have now to ask, is this the case? Several minor particulars require, in the first place, a moment's notice.

It is urged that in the Gospel St. John does not name himself, that in the Apocalypse he does; that, since his name is given in the latter book, it ought to have been given with a fulness resembling that with which he makes himself known to us in the former as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; that, coming before us in the one case as an Apostle, we might have expected him in the other to describe himself by a higher designation than a "servant" of Christ;<sup>3</sup> and that a spirit of true humility would have led him to

<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung*, § 189, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Die K. Ev.* p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. i. 1.

avoid speaking of himself as he does when he tells us that the wall of the New Jerusalem had "twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb."<sup>1</sup>

These objections are to a great degree inconsistent with one another; but, without dwelling upon this, the first of them is at once disposed of by remembering the difference of the two books; the one historical, and intended only to bring forward the Redeemer, while keeping the writer out of view; the other apocalyptic, and needing a distinct voucher, on the part of the author, for the marvellous revelations granted him. Besides this, it is to be observed that the writer of the Apocalypse, even though an Apostle, appears less in that capacity than as a prophet. He expressly designates his work as "the words of the prophecy," as "the words of the prophecy of this book" (chaps. i. 3; xxii. 18). But if so, the prophetic spirit, as borne witness to by all his predecessors, required that he should give his name. Every one of the Old Testament prophets names himself. In particular how often do we read in the book of Daniel, so largely followed in the Apocalypse, the words, "I, Daniel"!<sup>2</sup> Why not also in the Apocalypse, "I, John"? To the second objection it may be replied that the introduction of the words, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," for the simple designation "John," would not only have been cumbersome, but would have led to the charge that a

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. vii. 15; viii. 27, etc.

fabricator was endeavouring to pass for the Apostle. The humility alluded to in the third objection has its parallel in the case of the other Apostles, who frequently speak of themselves in a similar way;<sup>1</sup> besides which St. John, in the Apocalypse, writes less as an Apostle whose authority no one might despise than as a "brother" of all persecuted saints, a "partaker with them in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus."<sup>2</sup> They were suffering members of Christ's body; so was he. The deepest aspect of the Christian position, that in which Christians were most like their Master, was that of suffering. Why assert apostolic dignity and honour when in the furnace of affliction all had been welded into one? Finally, the fourth objection disappears if we consider that the words complained of are an exact echo of those of St. Paul when he tells us that Christians are "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets"<sup>3</sup> and that they express a fact borne witness to by the selection of the twelve. Nor can any one who recalls the light in which the "Lamb" is always set before us in the Apocalypse doubt that the glory of the Apostles of whom the writer speaks lay, not in themselves, but in their having been summoned to be "Apostles of the Lamb."

The above objections are trifling. We turn to one or two of a more important character drawn from the style and language, from the tone and spirit, from the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 5; Gal. i. 1; Titus i. 1; James i. 1; <sup>2</sup> Chap. i. 9. <sup>3</sup> Eph. ii. 20. Jude, verse 1.

method of delineation, and from the teaching of the book.

1. *The style and language.*—A negative argument first meets us here which it may be well to notice. The Apocalypse, it is said, fails to exhibit characteristic expressions of the Gospel, such as ἡ ἀλήθεια, ποιεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, εἶναι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας, ζωὴ αἰώνιος, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ πονηρός, ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι and γεννηθῆναι, τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου, σκοτία and φῶς, παρρησία, and others.<sup>1</sup> But many characteristic expressions of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans are not found in his equally undisputed first Epistle to the Corinthians; and an author's language is determined by the subject on which he writes. No argument of weight can be built on such negations. A similar remark applies to the complaint that the Apocalypse has in many respects a terminology not found in the Gospel. Neither the one book nor the other, nor both together, exhausts the terminology of the language which the writer employs.

It is at once to be allowed, however, that the style and language of the Apocalypse are very different from those of the other Johannine writings contained in the New Testament. The fact has constituted a difficulty from very early times. It was dwelt on by Dionysius of Alexandria in the middle of the third century with an acuteness not surpassed by any later critic; and the following words of Holtzmann may be

<sup>1</sup> Düsterdieck, p. 78; Schenkel, *B.-L.* iii. 339.

taken as the unexaggerated expression of the opinion of many modern scholars. Speaking of De Wette's canon, already quoted, Holtzmann says, "This canon rests above all on the fact of thorough difference of language and style, on the striking contrast between the rude carelessness, the multitude of linguistic roughnesses and mistakes in the specifically Jewish Apocalypse on the one hand, and the fluent Greek of the Gospel with its Alexandrian colouring on the other."<sup>1</sup> Objections of this class may be summed up in the statement, that the difference of style and language between the Gospel and the Apocalypse is so marked and penetrating as of itself to render the idea of identity of authorship untenable; that the barbarisms and solecisms of the Apocalyptist cannot have proceeded from the Evangelist; and that even when the two writers use the same words they connect with them different thoughts.

In proceeding to the points thus indicated we may at once dismiss, as a highly unsatisfactory explanation of the diversity of style before us, the assertion that, at the date of the composition of the Gospel, the long residence of St. John in Asia Minor had given him a better acquaintance with the Greek tongue than he had possessed when he wrote the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> Allowing for a moment that the interval between the writing of the two books was as great as supposed, it may yet

<sup>1</sup> Schenkel's *B.-L.* iii. p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> This is the explanation even of Dr. Lightfoot. In his Essay on "St. Paul and the Three,"

appended to his *Commentary on the Galatians* (p. 337), he thus speaks: "A lapse of more than thirty years spent in the midst

be maintained with confidence that the grammatical and stylistic eccentricities of the Apocalypse are not the result of ignorance. So far from this, the book displays more than ordinary freedom in the use of the Greek tongue. It is written in a far more difficult style than that of the calm and simple narratives of the Gospel. It is figurative, poetic, impassioned. In various passages, such as the description of the fall of Babylon in chap. xviii. and that of the New Jerusalem in chap. xxi., it rises to a strain of eloquence unsurpassed by anything that has come down to us from Greek antiquity. No tyro acquiring a knowledge of the language could have penned such passages. The writer is at home not only in his thoughts but with his words. Had he not been so his poetic inspiration would have been quenched. Still more decidedly must we dismiss the idea, supported by no mean names, that the Apocalyptist wrote Greek which he wished to be recognised as bad; that he avoided customary expressions in order to bring his language into closer correspondence with his extraordinary revelations; and that he set the ordinary rules of grammar at defiance, because he had already defied the ordinary forms of thought. Such a course is too trifling to be ascribed to him. It would be out of keeping with his seriousness and intensity of feeling. Whatever we do

of a Gentile population will explain the contrasts of language and imagery between the Apocalypse and the later writings of St. John, due allowance being

made for the difference of subject"; and, in a note, he adds that "the difficulties are greatly increased if a late date be assigned to the Apocalypse."

we must start with the conviction that, in writing a *revelation*, the Seer desired to be understood; and that, if different forms of expression occurred to him, he would choose the most common and intelligible as the best fitted to his end. Once more, the idea of some that the linguistic peculiarities of the Apocalypse are due to a certain harshness and roughness in the mode of speech that belongs to age compared with youth, is to be set aside as not sufficiently supported by the experience of literary men. Our explanation of the phenomenon before us, if explanation can be given, must be sought in some other than any of these ways now mentioned.

Again, little need be said of results to be expected from an amended text. It is true that there are passages in the book in which objection taken to the language has been removed by later readings. It is so, *e.g.*, in chap. vii. 10, where *κράζουσι* is now read for *κράζοντες*; in chap. viii. 11, where *ἐγένετο* is now read for *γίνεται*; in chap. xi. 9, 10, where all the futures are now read as presents: and in chap. xi. 11, where the simple *αὐτοῖς* ought to be read instead of either *ἐπ' αὐτούς* or *ἐν αὐτοῖς*. Other examples might no doubt be added; but the effect produced would be so slight that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it.

For the same reason we may omit all reference to passages where apparent anomalies of grammar are abundantly confirmed both by classical and New Testament usage; as, *e.g.*, the frequent use of the nominative for the vocative, and of the plural for the

dual, or the occasional use of the accusative to denote a point, as well as continuance, of time. Too many parallels to such constructions can be adduced to make it needful to say more of them than that they ought never to have been spoken of in this connexion.<sup>1</sup>

We turn to real anomalies.

A very large part of the question connected with them belongs to the consideration of *intention*. If there be proof that the author was not only acquainted with ordinary usage but that he commonly employed it; and if, at the same time, it can be shown that, when he departs from it, he does it in such a manner, and on such occasions, as to make it clear that his departure was *designed*, the difficulty now dealt with is in a great degree removed. These peculiarities of construction are then no longer to be spoken of as barbarisms, or as indications of an imperfect knowledge of Greek. The contrary inference must be drawn. To violate the grammar or the genius of a language, either without knowing what we are about, or loosely, irregularly, and without evident intention, is unquestionably a token of ignorance; but to do so with design, however it may indicate folly, or vanity, or bad taste, is not. Departure from ordinary idiom then presupposes an acquaintance with it; and if, instead of being foolish or vain, the writer was obviously possessed of the opposite qualities, it is no unfair inference that he must have had a full hold of the speech that he employs. The departures of such a writer as

<sup>1</sup> Compare Moulton's *Wincr.* *passim*.



Thomas Carlyle from the ordinary idiom of his contemporaries presuppose a more than ordinarily perfect, rather than an imperfect, acquaintance with the English tongue. Nor does it matter although, in judging of such a phenomenon, we may not always be able to discover exactly what the *intention* is. In a book of such peculiar structure as the Apocalypse, many of the figures of which baffle the skill of the interpreter, nothing else is to be expected. We must be prepared for inability to penetrate into those innermost feelings of the author which reveal themselves in a manner so remote and delicate. Let us turn to some of the anomalies complained of. In doing so we shall keep chiefly in view the objections of Lücke, who has treated the point with all his usual care and fairness.<sup>1</sup>

The very first that meets us is one not only of the most remarkable, but of the most convincing, that the point of view under which we are now regarding these anomalies is correct. It is the construction of ἀπό in chap. i. 4, ἀπὸ ὃ ὦν καὶ ὃ ἦν καὶ ὃ ἐρχόμενος. The preposition is used thirty-nine times in the Apocalypse; and, in every instance, one of them occurring in the verse before us, and another at the beginning of ver. 5, it is construed, in regular usage, with the genitive. Can there be a moment's doubt that Winer is right when he says that "the nominative is here designedly treated as an indeclinable noun?"<sup>2</sup> Again, feminine nouns are followed by an adjective or a participle in the masculine, τὰς ψυχὰς . . . λέγοντες; φωνήν

<sup>1</sup> *Versuch*, p. 448, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Moulton's *Winer*, p. 227.

λέγοντα ; φωνή λέγων.<sup>1</sup> Yet the construction not only of feminine adjectives in general, but of these *particular feminines*, with the feminine nouns that properly belong to them, is perfectly familiar to the writer. In the verse immediately following the first of the above examples we meet with φωνῆ μεγάλη; and again and again, as in chaps. xiv. 18 ; xvi. 1, 17 ; xviii. 2, 4, etc., the same thing occurs ; while in chap. xvi. 3 a similar observation holds with regard to ψυχῆ.

Again, neuter nouns are followed by plural verbs in many passages,<sup>2</sup> but they are often also construed with the singular.<sup>3</sup> In chap. i. 19 we have even both constructions in the same verse.

Again, the nominative is met where we should have expected an oblique case corresponding to the case of the word with which the former is evidently in apposition. Many illustrations of this, given by objectors, are hardly indeed to be accepted as such. In chaps. xix. 6 ; xx. 2 the reading is too doubtful to be relied on, and chaps. ii. 20 ; v. 12 ; viii. 9 ; ix. 14 ; xiv. 7, 14 ; xxi. 12 are susceptible of other and simple explanations. Still a sufficient number of instances remains to arrest attention, such as chap. i. 5, where we have μάρτυς in apparent apposition with χριστοῦ ; chap. iii. 12, ἡ καταβαίνουσα with Ἱερουσαλήμ in the genitive ; chap. xiv. 12, οἱ τηροῦντες with τῶν ἀγίων, and perhaps others. But this construction is

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. vi. 9 ; ix. 13 ; iv. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Chaps. ii. 27 ; viii. 3 ; xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. iii. 4 ; xi. 13, 18 ; xv. 4, etc.

14 ; xiv. 13 ; xvi. 14 ; xix. 14, etc.

by no means a prevailing one throughout the book; and passages like chaps. iv. 9; vi. 1; vii. 1; viii. 13 establish in a perfectly incontestable manner that the writer was familiar with ordinary rules, and able to apply them when it suited him to do so.

Again, the present is said to pass into the future in chaps. i. 7; ii. 5, 16, 22, 23; iii. 9, and the aorist to be used for the future in chap. x. 7. But the use of these tenses is so regular in innumerable passages as to force us to the conclusion that, when there is a departure from it, which however there is not in several of the instances referred to, that departure is intentional.

Once more, there is a class of constructions with the verb *δίδωμι* presenting a singular contrast to what we should expect in a classical writer,<sup>1</sup> but the explanation is obvious. The verb referred to is one of the key-words both of the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel. In the former it is used no fewer than fifty-eight times, and the object is to guide us, even at the expense of correctness of idiom, directly to Him who is the source of all blessing, and the Giver of all good. Translators, even the recent Revisers of the New Testament, in order to preserve the idiom of their own tongue, have often neglected such peculiar constructions.<sup>2</sup> It may be doubted whether they have been right in doing so.

Enough has been said to establish the only point

<sup>1</sup> Comp. chaps. iii. 8, 9; viii. 3; xiii. 7, 16; xvii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 8; viii. 3.

at present under consideration, that the constructions of the Apocalypse objected to as anomalous are the result of deliberate intention on the writer's part.<sup>1</sup>

The argument now adduced gains force from the consideration that we can to a large extent discover what the intention is. It is the writer's aim, though not so much his *deliberate* aim as one arising out of the conditions amidst which he writes, to conform to the spirit of that prophetic and rhetorical method of address to which he and his readers had been accustomed in the language of the Old Testament. Nor is it strange that it should be so. Every one will admit that the Apocalypse is steeped in the essence of that style of thought by which the Old Testament prophets are marked. Shall not its language also be largely coloured in a similar way? The imagery of the Old Testament certainly lived in the mind of the Seer with not less vividness than in the minds of its original authors. He uses it far too freely to admit of any other supposition. There is no laboured effort to mould it to his purpose. There is no sitting down with the passage of an ancient prophet before him, and directly adapting it to his end. The prophets and their words are in his heart. He breathes their atmosphere, sees with their eyes,

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the language used in chap. i. 4, 5, Harnack has recently said, "The gross violations of Greek grammar are not to be explained from ignorance. . . . The author must have

deliberately intended to break the rules of grammar in order to give to the words of his greeting a certain elevation and solemnity" ("Revelation," in *Encycl. Brit.*)

hears with their ears, and is in every respect one with them. In these circumstances it is only most natural that their modes of expression should also influence him. Even in our own day one who lives much in the thoughts and language of the Bible will often use language, when speaking on sacred subjects, that at other times would appear ungrammatical. He will use "which" for who, and "let" for hinder; and his hearers, so far from considering this a fault, will own that it lends to his words a weight of sacred association which they would not otherwise possess. The very same thing could hardly fail to mark the writer of the Apocalypse; and it is only necessary to remember further that, in his case, this influence would flow from a double source—the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, for both can be proved to have been equally familiar to him.<sup>1</sup> When, accordingly, it is objected by Holtzmann, in the article above referred to, that the strong Hebraising of the Apocalypse is a proof, among others, that it cannot have proceeded from the author of the Gospel, we at once reply that this very Hebraising, so far from being itself the difficulty to be contended with, is a large part of the explanation of the real difficulty, the anomalous constructions. If indeed the Hebraistic *thoughts and figures* could not have been used by one who wrote the Gospel, an

<sup>1</sup> Proof of his acquaintance with the Hebrew Bible will not be asked for. Referring to his acquaintance with the LXX., and illustrating his statement by

examples in a note, Ewald says, "It cannot be doubted that our author knew the LXX., and had read it much."—*Die Joh. Schr.* ii. p. 52.

argument that would also prove that the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress* could not have written *The Jerusalem Sinner Saved*, we should be compelled to allow the force of the objection. But once admit that the Hebrew *figures* of the Apocalypse are not inconsistent with the position of the fourth Evangelist, and the Hebraising of the *style* follows as a natural consequence.

The writer does, then, intentionally Hebraise. Upon a point like this no authority can be quoted equal to that of Ewald, and that all the more because he rejects the identity of authorship for which we contend. Yet nothing can be more decided than his statement that the imitation of Hebrew idiom in the Apocalypse goes so far as to lead to many a change in Greek construction with the view of imitating the constructions of the Hebrew tongue; a statement which he immediately proceeds to illustrate by reference to a number of those cases most eagerly urged against the book. Such are *ἴνα* with a *καί* following, chaps. iii. 9; xiii. 16; xxii. 14: the change from the genitive to the accusative in chap. xvii. 4: the interchange of the accusative and nominative in chaps. iv. 4; vii. 9; x. 8; xi. 3; xiii. 3; xiv. 14; xx. 4: the giving a double gender to *ληνός*: the use of the masculine for other genders in chaps. xiii. 14; xvii. 3; xi. 4: and of the neuter for the masculine in chap. xii. 5.<sup>1</sup> The statement must be accepted as conclusive.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Joh. Schr.* ii. p. 53.

Still further, however, the influence of the Septuagint has to be noted; and, when it is, many other difficulties connected with the language before us disappear. The use of *ἰδοῦ*, *c.g.*, instead of *ἴδε*, is at once explained, the former being not only the more sonorous and impressive word, but being that also invariably employed in those Old Testament prophecies between which and those of the Apocalypse the resemblance is so close. The same remark explains the use of *παντοκράτωρ* and *σκηνή τοῦ μαρτυρίου*; while it at once disposes of the objection that in the Apocalypse we always meet with *Ἱεροσαλήμ*, though in the Gospel we invariably read *Ἱεροσόλυμα*, for the first of these two forms is that usually met with in the LXX.

The explanation applicable to these usages prepares us for its application to others; and the inference is confirmed by facts. Thus, the neuter plural noun is followed by the plural, not the singular, verb in such passages as Zechariah ii. 11; x. 7; xii. 3; Ezekiel xxxviii. 10; xxxix. 7; Nahum ii. 5; iii. 10, and that too although, as we see in Ezekiel xxxviii. 10, the ordinary usage was known to the writers. Thus the repetition of the preposition before a series of nouns, objected to in such a text as Rev. xvi. 13, continually meets us in the language of the prophets.<sup>1</sup> Nay, the tendency to repeat other words of a character still more marked is equally to be observed, as in Zechariah viii. 12, 19; and the desire to give a measured and

<sup>1</sup> Zechariah i. 4, 6; vi. 10, 14; viii. 7.

solemn march to the language at once supplies the explanation. Thus, too, the use of a present and a future verb in the same clause occurs quite as frequently in the Old Testament as it does in the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion from what has been said is obvious. The grammatical constructions of the Apocalypse arise not from ignorance, but from design, and from the fact that, in an apocalyptic book, the writer naturally employs a style of language which he had come to regard as not merely an appropriate, but as the only appropriate vehicle of visions such as his.

We are not wholly without analogy in this matter. Short as is our Lord's prophetic discourse in Matt. xxiv., and although so recorded that we cannot be sure that every word used is the exact equivalent of that originally spoken, it yet exhibits extremely similar phenomena. There is the same tendency to employ peculiar words, *ἐκολοβώθησαν, διχοτομήσει*;<sup>2</sup> the same *ἰδοῦ*, not *ἴδε*;<sup>3</sup> the same use of the present for the future.<sup>4</sup> Had the discourse been as long as the Apocalypse; still more, had it been marked by the disposition of that book to drive the prophetic style to the utmost limit of intelligibility, we can scarcely doubt that a much larger number of the anomalies

<sup>1</sup> Zechariah ii. 9, 10; xi. 6, where the future is not used for the present any more than in chap. iii. 9 the present is used for the future. (Comp. also such

a use of *δίδωμι* as is found in Zech. iii. 9.)

<sup>2</sup> Verses 22, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Verses 23, 25, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Verses 40, 41, 44.



which startle us in the one case would also have met us in the other.

In connexion with the point now before us, it is still further urged that not only are there anomalies of construction in the Apocalypse which forbid our ascribing its authorship to the writer of the fourth Gospel, but that the style of the books differs materially in at least two important particulars,—in the connecting particles employed in each, and in the different senses in which the same words are used.

The first of these particulars can hardly be spoken of as important. An author is not bound to use the same connecting particles in different books, and he cannot even be expected to do so if his whole subject, aim, and sphere of thought are different. Prophetic enthusiasm is so unlike calm narrative as almost to forbid that the binding particles of sentences, or the descriptive tenses used, shall be the same in both. The contrary is rather to be looked for. The sameness thus desiderated would really be an indication that the state of mind professed by the writer was, in one or other of his works, not genuine; that he had not really passed into the mood of which his book claimed to be an utterance; and that he had not yielded himself to that flow of living thought which, as it lives, weaves a garment for itself. Thus, to take one or two illustrations from the books we are examining. Why complain that *οὐν* is so much used as a particle of transition in the Gospel, or *καί* in the Apocalypse? It will be found in almost every

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case quoted from the former that *οὐδὲν* is much more than a mere copula. It introduces a reason why the second statement follows on the first. But *καί* in the latter is not intended to do so. It merely accumulates, one after another, successive parts of the visions of the Seer. Let the inquirer take the fourth chapter of the Gospel, or any other where *οὐδὲν* frequently occurs, and let him substitute for it the simple copula, he will immediately discover that the meaning intended by the Evangelist is not brought out; or let him select any chapter of the Apocalypse where the *καί* is as frequently to be met with, and let him substitute *οὐδὲν*, he will see at once that the simply successive character of the visions is destroyed. The different particles are used with perfect propriety; and, however attached a writer might be to one of them, he could not have given it a place where the other was demanded by the progress of his thoughts. In the correct reading of the first Epistle of St. John, too, the particle *οὐδὲν* does not occur at all, and yet the close connexion of that Epistle with the Gospel is, so far as concerns our present purpose, undisputed. Again, why complain that the historic present, although not unfrequent in the Gospel, is not used in the Apocalypse? Let us allow that the use of one of the commonest turns of Greek grammar may constitute a peculiarity upon which an argument may be built, is it not enough to observe that it is the intention of the Seer to introduce his visions as something belonging to the past, and not to lend them additional liveli-

ness of delineation by speaking as if they swept before his eye at the moment when he wrote? Again, why complain that the sentences of the Gospel, though not of the Apocalypse, frequently begin without any copula at all? The argument, if good for anything, will tell equally against the Johannine authorship of the first Epistle of St. John, in which the same peculiarity constantly occurs.<sup>1</sup> Once more, why urge that, because in the Gospel<sup>2</sup> the Hebrew term *Ῥαββί* is followed by the words *ὃ λέγεται ἑρμηνευόμενον, Διδάσκαλε*, a different writer appears in Rev. ix. 11, because we there read *ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἑβραϊστὶ Ἄβαδδὼν, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων*? The Greek term in the latter case is not, as in the former, the strict interpretation of the Hebrew; and the writer does not intend to present it to us as if it were. The Greek for *רַבָּי* is *ἀπόλεια*,<sup>3</sup> and only when we turn to the root of the Greek name Apollyon do we discover that it expresses the same meaning as the Hebrew. In all these cases, and many others might be taken did space permit, it is difference of thought that produces difference of words.

The second statement above mentioned, that even when the same characteristic words are used in our two writings they are used in a different sense, is much more important than the one now considered. A writer of thoroughly marked individuality of character

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. ii. 22, 24; iv. 4, 6, 7-10, 11-13; so also ii. 5, 6, 9, 10; iii. 2, 4, 5, 9, 10; comp. Westcott, *The Epp. of St. John*, p. xl.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. i. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. LXX. Ps. lxxxviii. 12; Job xxviii. 22.

and views, however different at different times may be the purpose of his books and the style of their composition, will hardly use the same words with much diversity of meaning. His ideas we may expect to be the same, and his words are the expression of his ideas. Any well-grounded charge, therefore, that peculiar words of the Gospel, meeting us again in the Apocalypse or *vice versa*, bear a different sense in the two books would certainly constitute an argument of weight against identity of authorship. Many illustrations of the alleged difference are given by Lücke.<sup>1</sup> It will be proper to examine them, and that in the order in which they are adduced.<sup>2</sup> We take first one mentioned by Lücke in a different connexion, but properly belonging to the point before us.<sup>3</sup>

"*Ἔργα*,—not found in the Seven Epistles in its genuine Johannine sense of Christian works of God (*Christliche Gotteswerke*);—but why limit us to the Seven Epistles, and not quote chap. xiv. 13, where this very idea is met with in its clearest form? Or why omit the many passages in which the "works" of the wicked are spoken of in a strictly contrasted sense, thus showing us, on the principle of contrasts

<sup>1</sup> *Versuch*, p. 675, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The writer has met with the statement that details such as those to be now spoken of are of little consequence. Be it so. It ought, however, to be remembered that *they were once thought to be of consequence*, and that, if they are not now so much urged as formerly,

this is due to the fact that the objections founded upon them have been successfully repelled. Yet they are still important, for those who will study them will admit that they are not simply negative; they have a positive bearing upon the point before us.

<sup>3</sup> p. 673.

explained in the previous volume, p. 110, the precise idea which the Seer attached to the word when he applied it to the righteous? <sup>1</sup> Even in the Seven Epistles *ἔργα* meets us in this sense. <sup>2</sup> The real truth, however, is that both in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse the word *ἔργα* is used in its purely Johannine force,—to indicate, not so much isolated deeds, whether good or evil, as the whole character of the life making itself manifest to men.

We turn to the examples upon which Lücke seems especially to depend—*Ἀληθινός* in the sense of the real, the only existing, or the true, in the Gospel; synonymous with *πιστός*, *δίκαιος*, *ἅγιος* in the Apocalypse, <sup>3</sup> and there associated with the *λόγοι*, *κρίσεις*, *ὁδοί* of God rather than with God, or such symbols of Christ as “light,” and “bread.” The facts are that in the Gospel *ἀληθινός* is used twice of God, <sup>4</sup> three times of Christ in His character as the Light, the Bread from heaven, and the Vine, <sup>5</sup> once of worshippers, <sup>6</sup> once of a *λόγος*, <sup>7</sup> once of Christ’s *κρίσις*, <sup>8</sup> and once of a *μαρτυρία*; <sup>9</sup> that in the Apocalypse it is used once of God, <sup>10</sup> three times of Christ, <sup>11</sup> once of the *ὁδοί* of Him who is *κύριος*, <sup>12</sup> twice of the *κρίσεις* of the Lord, <sup>13</sup> and thrice of His *λόγοι*. <sup>14</sup> No more need be

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. ix. 20 ; xvi. 11 ; xviii. 6 ; xx. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. ii. 2, 19 ; iii. 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Chaps. iii. 7, 14 ; xix. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Chaps. vii. 28 ; xvii. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Chaps. i. 9 ; vi. 32 ; xv. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. iv. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. iv. 37.

<sup>8</sup> Chap. viii. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Chap. xix. 35.

<sup>10</sup> Chap. vi. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Chaps. iii. 7, 14 ; xix. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Chap. xv. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Chaps. xvi. 7 ; xix. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Chaps. xix. 9 ; xxi. 5 ; xxii. 6.

said to show how closely the usage corresponds; while the passages above referred to, in which it occurs along with other adjectives, need only to be looked at in order to see that it is *not* synonymous with these, but that it has its own proper and distinctive meaning. Were similarity not only in the use of a particular word but in the *special meaning* of that word desired, a better example could hardly be found than in ἀληθινός. Ἀγάπη and ἀγαπᾶν are said to have neither the same emphasis (*accent*) nor the same idea in the Apocalypse as in the Gospel. The two words occur six times in the Apocalypse. Three of these are abandoned by Lücke;<sup>1</sup> and, as one of the three is “to Him that loved us,” a fourth,<sup>2</sup> “I have loved thee,” must be added to the list. Only two remain, “they loved not their lives unto the death,” and “the beloved city,”<sup>3</sup> with which it seems enough to compare John xii. 43, “they loved the praise of men,” words showing that the Evangelist also could apply the expression to other objects than God, or Christ, or our Christian brethren. Σκηνοῦν is said to be used by the Evangelist in the technical sense of the dwelling of the Shechinah of the θεὸς λόγος, and with the preposition ἐν, while it is used in the Apocalypse of God with a distinct reference to the σκηνὴ τ. θεοῦ, and with the prepositions ἐπί or μετά, or, as in chaps. x. 4; xx. 3, in the sense of “dwelling” in general. These last references must be intended for chaps. xii. 12; xiii. 6, and they supply an exact

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. i. 5; ii. 4, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Chaps. xii. 11; xx. 9.

parallel to John i. 14, where the reference is not to the Shechinah of the *θεὸς λόγος* but to the "Word made flesh" whose glory the Evangelist had "beheld." Besides this, the meaning of the word in the Apocalypse has been misapprehended by Lücke. It denotes much more than the mere general notion of dwelling. There lies in it one of the particulars of that identification of Christ and His people which is fundamental to the Seer. Jesus "tabernacled";<sup>1</sup> they also "tabernacle." The reference in chaps. xii. 12; xiii. 6, it will be observed, is not to angels or spirits in heaven, but to the ransomed family of God in their condition of heavenly privilege upon earth. They "rejoice," while "woe" falls upon the "earth" and the "sea," or, in other words, upon the ungodly. It may be further noticed that the verb is found in the New Testament only in the two books of which we speak. Lücke's observations on *μαρτυρία* and *μάρτυς* might almost be passed by as belonging rather to a different department of the subject. It may however be observed that in the Gospel the time was hardly come to speak of "witnesses" of Jesus, that in the Apocalypse it was; and further that in John iii. 11, 32, 33; v. 31, the use of *μαρτυρία* is precisely analogous to its use in such passages as Rev. i. 2, 9; xii. 17. "Ἐχειν μέρος is said to be construed in Rev. xx. 6 with ἐν, in John xiii. 8 with μετά. Construction in the former case with μετὰ would be impossible, and the use of the preposition is determined by the idea to be expressed.

<sup>1</sup> John i. 14.

With far more reason might it be urged that Romans and 1st Corinthians cannot have the same author, because in chap. xi. 25 of the former we have ἀπὸ μέρους, and in chap. xi. 18 of the latter μέρος τι, to express not a different but the same idea. Σφραγίζειν, it is alleged, is frequently used in the Apocalypse in the sense of closing fast,<sup>1</sup> or of putting a mark on one,<sup>2</sup> while it is met with only twice in the Gospel,<sup>3</sup> and then with the meaning of confirming or legitimising. The interpretation thus given to the word in the Gospel is incorrect. The fundamental idea in John vi. 27 has nothing to do with confirmation or proof. It denotes the act by which God has marked out the Son as what He is, in the office He is to fill, and in the blessings He is to bestow; precisely the same idea as belongs to it in Rev. vii. 3, etc., where the servants of God are marked out as His.<sup>4</sup> Again in Rev. xx. 3 the word includes no thought of "holding fast," which had already been expressed in the previous ἐκλεισεν. It calls attention only to the mark or seal impressed upon the abyss,<sup>5</sup> by which the Almighty signifies that the enemy within is kept there for His own purposes, with which none can interfere. The same idea appears also in chap. x. 4, although obscured in the authorised translation by the word having been rendered "seal up" instead of "seal." The use of ἰδού has already been considered, and nothing further need be said of

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. x. 4; xx. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. vii. 3, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Chaps. iii. 33; vi. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. *Expositor*, Jan. 1885, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Daniel vi. 17.



it. The use of *ὁ νικῶν* in the Apocalypse is allowed to present an important resemblance to its use in the fourth Gospel and in the Epistles of St. John; yet even here, it is urged, there is a difference, the verb being in the former absolute, in the latter having an object such as *κόσμον* or *πονηρόν*. Let our readers turn to Rev. xi. 7; xii. 11; xiii. 7; xvii. 14, passages not referred to by Lücke, and they will not only find an object associated with the verb, but the very same object as that in 1 John iv. 4. The resemblance in the use of *τηρεῖν*, not less striking than that in the use of *νικᾶν*, is allowed, but it is objected that in Rev. xiv. 12 we have *τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ* as an object to the verb, an object never found in the Evangelist, who uses the word *πίστις*, except in the Apocalypse, only in 1 John v. 4. But it is Christ Himself who uses the different expressions in which this verb occurs in the Gospel, and it was much more natural for Him to speak of “keeping His sayings, His word, His commandments,” than of “keeping His faith.” The further objection, that the words of Rev. ii. 26, “he that keepeth My works unto the end,” is a formula which would hardly have entered into the thoughts of the Evangelist, is difficult to answer, because the Evangelist has given no indication that it might not. This much, however, cannot be forgotten, that the word *ἔργα* in the fourth Gospel denotes in a very peculiar manner the whole working of the Redeemer, all in which He naturally expressed Himself, and that *τηρεῖν* might therefore be as easily connected with it as with *λόγοι* or *ῥῆμα* or *ἐντολαί*. Any

objection founded on the use of  $\Sigma\alpha\rho\alpha\nu\hat{\alpha}\varsigma$  is abandoned by Lücke himself, who compensates, however, for its abandonment by attaching all the more importance to the fact that the appellation "Lamb," so often applied in the Apocalypse to the exalted Redeemer, is there expressed by the term  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ , while in the Gospel we read only of  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ . Yet the use of the former instead of the latter in the Apocalypse admits of a simple and natural explanation, which again binds our two writers together instead of separating them from each other. For the word  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  is not once used by the writer of the fourth Gospel in any description of his own. It occurs only twice in that work,<sup>1</sup> and both times in the mouth of John the Baptist. The word  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$  again is found only once in the Gospel,<sup>2</sup> and then in the lips of Jesus. Can we suppose that this was the only time during a three years' ministry that our Lord, who seems often to have used of Himself the figure of a shepherd, spoke of his  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ ? Hardly will any one for a moment think so. If we may not say that it is certain, we may at least look upon it as in the highest degree probable, that the tender expression must have been often in the Good Shepherd's mouth, and in that circumstance alone we have an ample explanation of the fact that St. John should have preferred it to  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ , a word associated with no such endearing recollections. The memory of the Evangelist guides the Seer.<sup>3</sup> That the Apocalyptist should speak in chap.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 29, 36.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxi. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Füller, in his *Comm. on the Apoc.*, suggests that St. John's

xxi. 6 of the fountain  $\tau. \text{ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς}$ , while the writer of the fourth Gospel speaks of  $\text{ὕδωρ ζωῆν}$ , cannot be deemed of consequence, as Lücke himself allows the phrase  $\text{ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς}$  to be equivalent to  $\text{ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζωῆν}$ ; and that in Rev. ii. 17 we should meet, instead of the latter expression, with the phrase  $\text{τὸ μάννα}$ , is at once explained when we remember that every one of the figures of the latter book is taken from the Old Testament. Finally, it is urged that in Rev. xix. 13 the expression  $\text{ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ}$ , while bearing an unmistakable resemblance to the conception of the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, is distinguished from it by the fact that in the former the term is applied to the historical, in the latter to the prehistorical Christ. The objection is again unfounded. The "name" of the *historical* Christ is that referred to in the 12th, not the 13th, verse of chap. xix. It is the "name which no one knoweth but He Himself," which expresses the character of His whole redeeming work, and which can only be "known" (*i.e.* in the Johannine sense, *known with inward and experimental knowledge*), by the Father who plans the work,<sup>1</sup> the Son who executes it, and the members of Christ's Body when their union with their Lord is perfected.<sup>2</sup> The name of verse 13, "The Word of God," is the name which belongs *originally* and *essentially* ( $\text{κέκληται}$ ) to the Rider upon the white horse, and which is again fittingly applied to Him in the

love of the word  $\text{ἄρδιον}$  may have been determined by the direct contrast which it affords to  $\text{θηρίον}$ ,

the wild beast, the enemy of the Lamb.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Matt. xi. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii. 17.

moment of His final victory, when the historical conflict is ending, and when He who says "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do," immediately adds, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."<sup>1</sup> One consideration again is sufficient to remove any apparent force belonging to the statement that in the Gospel we read only of the  $\acute{\omicron}$   $\lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , without the genitive  $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  which accompanies it in the Apocalypse. No one will deny that the Apocalypse, if not the work of the author of the fourth Gospel, must have supplied to that work its special view of the Redeemer. The author of the Gospel, therefore, can have seen no difference of meaning between the words he found before him and the shorter term employed by himself, or he would certainly have made the resemblance more complete.<sup>2</sup>

We have thus examined all those cases of a different use of the same words in our two documents which are adduced by Lücke to prove diversity of authorship. In every one of them we have either found the alleged difference disappear, or resolve itself, when the words

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> After all the weary tossing to and fro of this word *Logos* which has lasted for such a length of time, it is satisfactory to find one of the latest and ablest inquirers on the Continent distinctly allowing that the *Logos* in the one book is the same as in the other. "This designation of

Messiah," says Pfeiderer (*Urchristenthum* p. 346) "is absolutely nothing else than the *Logos* made known to us in the Gospel of John." Different writers indeed are supposed to name Him in the different books, and to regard Him from wholly different points of view, but it is the same *Logos*.

were properly interpreted, into identity of meaning. A few additional illustrations of the same kind might be found in other writers, such as De Wette or Davidson, but those who have followed us thus far will not ask a further prosecution of the argument. Instead of proving a difference of authorship it seems rather, so far as it has gone, to favour the conclusion that, notwithstanding many apparent indications to the contrary, the authorship of the two books is one.

2. A second objection to that unity of authorship for which we are contending is drawn from *the tone and spirit* of the books. The heat and fire which appear in the Apocalypse are said to be entirely out of keeping with the quietness and gentleness of the fourth Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John. But to ascribe such a tone to these latter writings is either to misunderstand them or to view them superficially. There is, indeed, one section of the Gospel, chap. xiii. to chap. xvii., when the great conflict is over and Jesus is alone with His disciples, which breathes nothing but an atmosphere of the most perfect love and peace. The other chapters leave a wholly different impression upon the mind. The "Son of thunder" is there beheld in every incident and in every discourse of Jesus which he records. In none of the earlier Gospels is the idea of struggle, of conflict, of tumultuous and excited feeling, so constantly or powerfully impressed upon the mind. Even the denunciations of the Scribes and Pharisees in Matt. xxiii. are not for a moment to be compared in intensity of rebuke with

the language of chap. ix. of the Gospel of St. John. The single term "the Jews," used by the writer to describe the opponents of Jesus, carries in it, when properly appreciated, a depth of indignation and scorn to which the rest of the New Testament affords no parallel; while the manner in which the persons so designated are presented to us in chaps. xviii. and xix., when they accuse Jesus before Pilate, reveals a depth of emotion on the writer's part in which all the most eager passions of the soul were stirred. Similar remarks may be made upon the first Epistle of St. John. Where else do we find such expressions as "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in the darkness, we lie"; "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar"; "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer"; "The whole world lieth in the evil one"?<sup>1</sup> These expressions prove that, whatever may be the tone of calmness and love which in some respects characterises this Epistle, there is a slumbering fire beneath ready to break out when occasion calls for it. No well-founded contrast can be drawn between the spirit disclosed by the Gospel and Epistle upon the one hand, and the Apocalypse upon the other. Nor can any criticism betray more imperfect appreciation of the tone of these several writings than that of Düsterdieck when, comparing the Apocalypse with the other writings of St. John, he declares that "another

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. i. 6; ii. 4, 22; iii. 15; v. 19.

spirit thinks, another heart beats, and another mouth speaks in it.”<sup>1</sup> The peaceful features of the former are not more touching than those of the latter. The severity, the indignation, and the storm of the latter are not more intense than those of the former.

3. A third objection to the unity of authorship we are now considering relates to *the method of delineation* marking our two books. The one, it is urged, is sensuous, the other spiritual; the one is full of concrete and plastic representations, and denotes its objects by fixed measures and numbers, the other moves in the region of pure thought, making itself manifest in all the freedom of truth, in speculative depth, and in a rich power of grace for the life.<sup>2</sup> To the contrast thus drawn it is not sufficient (with Füller) to reply that, in the Apocalypse, the Seer is little more than a passive instrument relating what is presented to him in vision. However true the Divine source of what he sees, he must have entered fully into its spirit; and, in his descriptions he must be understood to reveal not merely the impressions made upon him by an external Divine agency, but habits and modes of thought which he had made his own. It is more, therefore, to the purpose to say that the two methods of delineation are not inconsistent with each other, that the prominence of one at any particular moment is determined by the circumstances of the case or the object which the author has in view, and that the inward appreciation of Christ's Kingdom in its utmost spiritual power

<sup>1</sup> *u.s.* p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Baur, p. 346, etc.; Düsterdieck, p. 69, etc.

may consist with the liveliest perception of its outward fortunes in the world. The parable of the leaven has a different meaning from that of the mustard seed; yet the lips of the same Jesus uttered both.

Even this is not all that may be said, for the decided way in which the two books are opposed to each other rests, partly upon an imperfect appreciation of the form of the Gospel, and partly upon a false interpretation of the Apocalypse. Nothing, for example, is more characteristic of the Gospel than the extraordinary degree to which it brings spiritual truths before us in material forms. Each miracle recorded in it is an illustration of this fact, while the details of the narratives are often so grouped as to show that each detail, to the ordinary beholder a matter of insignificance, was to the writer full of spiritual meaning.<sup>1</sup> The same similarity will afterwards be pointed out with regard to numbers.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand it is impossible to take the sensuous figures of the Apocalypse in their literal acceptance. Even a Jew could hardly have imagined, *e.g.*, that the New Jerusalem there spoken of was to be an actual city, or, if he did, he would at once have been recalled to the exercise of his reason by the words of ver. 29, "And I saw no temple therein." Few things can be clearer than that the *thought* of that chapter is spiritual, not material, though clothed in a material form, and when we would understand a writer it is with his thought,

<sup>1</sup> Comp. paper by the writer in *Br. and For. Ev. Rev.*, Oct. 1871, and "Intr. to Gospel of St. John" in *Comm.* p. xxv. <sup>2</sup> p. 221.



not the form of it, that we have to do. The one is essential; the other accidental. No doubt the Gospel and the Apocalypse are very different, but we have too many examples (witness Goethe) of a high poetic genius delighting in the plastic figures of the imagination, combined with speculative depth and the power of uttering pure thought in its purest forms, to make it impossible to suppose that the two gifts could be united in one man.<sup>1</sup>

Of the fact that the Apocalypse is pervaded by pure Christian thought, however much it may be presented in the forms of the Old Testament, we have already spoken.

4. A fourth objection to the unity of authorship now claimed for the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse is taken from *the teaching* of each book. The points especially selected by Düsterdieck to establish diversity of authorship are the following: the first and second resurrections of chap. xx.; the thousand years' reign of the same chapter; the doctrine of antichrist and his opposition to the Redeemer; and the manner in which the *λόγος* is described. Of the last of these four points we have already said enough.<sup>2</sup> The first

<sup>1</sup> Weizäcker speaks of the Jewish Christianity of the Apocalypse as taking its own new and peculiar path. "Historically we see in it a development of the faith of the earliest Church. The development springs on the one hand from the recognition of the Gentile Church, and on the other

from the deepened faith in the Person of Christ, in whom the importance once belonging to the law and the Scriptures were merged." — (Quoted in Holtzmann's *Einl.* p. 421, note.) Little more need be asked for.

<sup>2</sup> p. 207.

two have also been discussed,<sup>1</sup> and an effort has been made to show that, instead of a difference in the teaching of our two books, their unity in this respect is of the most striking kind, any supposition to the contrary arising from imperfect interpretation. A few words have still to be spoken on the third point, the doctrine of antichrist. The objection rests on the idea that, in the Apocalypse, antichrist is a person who appears in chap. xvii. 11, instead of a spirit of hostility to Christ. But there is a want of evidence that this representation is correct. The beast of the passage referred to is in reality identical with the beast of verse 8 of the same chapter. It is an eighth, though not numerically in the same line with the seven. Then it would be an eighth *head*; but the Seer is dealing with *the beast itself*, not with its heads, and it is spoken of as an eighth, simply because it follows the seven, and because in its final condition the malice and evil of its previous conditions are concentrated. It is also "of the seven." The meaning cannot be that it is one of the seven, when it had just been described as distinct from them. The preposition "of," too, in the usage of St. John denotes origin and, with origin, identity of nature. The beast is thus the essence, the concentrated expression, of the seven, and the embodiment of their spirit. In all this we have nothing of a personal antichrist; we have simply the last and worst manifestation of the ungodly power of the world. Not only so. When we attend less to any particular

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, vi.

text than to the general strain and bearing of the Apocalypse, the resemblance between the teaching of that book and other writings of St. John on the subject of antichrist comes still more strikingly into view. In 2 John, verse 7, we have a definition of antichrist, "They that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist," words upon which Dr. Westcott thus comments, "The thought centres upon the present perfection of the Lord's Manhood, which *is* still, and is to be manifested, and not upon the past fact of His coming."<sup>1</sup> What is this but the keynote of the Apocalypse, distinctly struck in chap. i. 17, 18, and sounding throughout the book? The Seer has constantly before him the risen and glorified Redeemer, who, for the present unseen, is about to manifest Himself in the brightness of His glory. Opposition to Him in that aspect is the antichristian spirit; and the opposition, when it reaches the extreme point of its development, is antichrist. If the Apocalypse does not *define* in the same terms as the Epistle it utters the very same thought from its beginning to its close. It centres in the same "perfection of the Lord's Manhood." Its enemy of Christ, its antichrist, is no other than St. John's in his Epistle.

II. We have considered the most important objections urged against the unity of authorship of the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse; but it is not enough to answer objections. Those who defend the traditional

<sup>1</sup> *Epp. of S. John, in loc.*

view of the Church are entitled to approach the subject from the positive as well as the negative side, and the importance of the question at issue calls on them to do so. Our plea is that the two books so closely resemble each other in many essential particulars as to lend powerful confirmation to the idea that they spring from the same source. Of these particulars we notice the Language, the Structure, and the Teaching of both books.

1. Their *Language*.—We have already found Düsterdieck and others objecting to the identity of authorship for which we plead on the ground that many characteristic expressions of each book are not found in the other, and we have allowed that to a certain extent the statement is correct. But a wider consideration of the language of both discloses an amount of similarity which cannot be disregarded. We take first some individual and characteristic words.

'*Ἀληθινός*, a word so characteristic of St. John that, while found only once in the Synoptic Gospels, once in a Pauline Epistle, and four times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it occurs nine times in the fourth Gospel, four times in the first Epistle of St. John, and ten times in the Apocalypse, and in every instance in these three latter books in *its own distinctive signification*. The word is allowed to be characteristic of the fourth Gospel. It is equally characteristic of the Apocalypse. Not less marked is the use of the verb *δίδωμι*. The word is in itself simple, and is often met with in the different books of the New Testament; but the following passages in the Gospel show a charac-

teristic employment of it—chaps. iii. 35 ; v. 22, 27, 36 ; vi. 65 ; vii. 22 ; xiii. 3 ; xvii. 6. A similar remark applies to the following texts in the Apocalypse—chaps. ii. 23 ; iii. 8, 9 ; vi. 4 ; vii. 2 ; viii. 3 ; xi. 3 ; xiii. 7, 16 ; xvi. 8 ; xvii. 17 ; xx. 4. These passages have only to be looked at in order to satisfy us that in both books the word is used in circumstances in which we should certainly have expected some other form of expression. The word *νικᾶν* is not less characteristic. Found only four other times in the New Testament, it occurs six times in the first Epistle of St. John and sixteen times in the Apocalypse, while its special force appears to rest upon the words of our Lord in John xvi. 33. However this may be, it is undoubtedly characteristic of that idea of the Christian life as a victory in the midst of conflict which marks so strongly the views of the beloved disciple. *Μαρτυρεῖν* and *μαρτυρία*, it is on all hands allowed, express a characteristic idea of the fourth Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John. The words and the idea are also characteristic of the Apocalypse. The same thing may be said of the word *τηρεῖν*, which, from its use in the Gospel and Epistle, we are entitled to call a peculiarly Johannine word. But it is not less characteristic of the Apocalypse, and that too in its own peculiar sense (as distinguished from *φυλάσσειν*) of “keeping,” by the exercise of active and strenuous care, in the midst of surrounding difficulties, rather than of watching over to preserve. In not one of the passages in which the former verb is used in the Apocalypse could we sub-

stitute the latter without changing the idea which we learn from the Gospel (especially from chap. xvii. 12, where it is used in conjunction with *φυλάσσειν*) to attach to it. Of the use of the word *σκηνοῦν* we have already spoken. To these instances may well be added the singular use of the preposition *ἐκ* in the Apocalypse. This preposition seems to be used in that book one hundred and twenty-seven times, and its proper signification in almost every case is "out of"; yet so strange, and apparently so unidiomatic, would be the result of such a rendering,<sup>1</sup> that the New Testament Revisers have only felt themselves able to adopt it forty-one times out of all that number. On other occasions they resort to such renderings as "of," "from," "by," "with," "on," "at," "for," "because of," "by reason of," "from among." Compare this with the use of the same preposition in the fourth Gospel, where we meet it in a similarly strange and apparently unidiomatic way, so that the Revisers have again thought it necessary to depart from their original, and to substitute "of" or "from" for "out of," though at the cost of sacrificing the peculiar meaning of St. John.<sup>2</sup> In cases such as these, and others might be added, the preposition springs out of a mode of thought characteristic of the writer, is far from being equivalent to *ἀπό*, and is without a parallel in the other New Testament books.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. especially such passages as chaps. ii. 7, 21, 22; vi. 4, 10; viii. 11; ix. 18; xiv. 13; xv. 2; xvi. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. chaps. iii. 31; iv. 13; vi. 13, 39, 51; viii. 23, 44; ix. 6; xi. 1; xii. 3, 27, 32; xvii. 15.

In addition to what has now been said two or three special passages deserve a moment's notice—Rev. i. 7 compared with John xix. 37, in both of which Zech. xii. 10 is quoted, and the Hebrew is rendered not, as in the LXX., by the Greek *κατορχεῖσθαι*, but by a word of wholly different signification, *ἐκκεντεῖν*. The efforts made to escape the force of the conclusion to be drawn from this are allowed by Dr. Davidson to be futile<sup>1</sup>—Rev. xxii. 2 compared with John xix. 18, the position of the tree of life relative to the two sides of the river of life being described by the phrase *τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν*, the position of Jesus on the Cross relative to the two thieves who were crucified with Him by *καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἄλλους δύο ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν*. The similarity is rendered more striking by the fact that the other Evangelists employ an entirely different phrase in relation to the crucifixion, *εἰς ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ εἰς ἐξ ἐωνύμων*<sup>2</sup>—Rev. xi. 8 compared with John xix. 20, the true reading of the latter passage supplying the rendering, which even the Revisers have ventured to place only in the margin, “For the place of the city where Jesus was crucified was nigh at hand.” This reading has indeed been ridiculed on the ground that it makes St. John say that Jesus was crucified within the city, when the fact was well known to every one that He had suffered “without the gate.”<sup>3</sup> So far from doing so, it affords one of

<sup>1</sup> *Intr.* i. p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> M'Clellan *in loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 38; Mark xv. 27; Luke xxiii. 33.

the most striking coincidences of thought to be found in the writings we are examining; the language in both cases, however different, being used for the purpose of bringing the guilty city of Jerusalem into closer connexion with the crime of the crucifixion of its Lord.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the illustrations spoken of in the text many others may be briefly referred to in a note. Attention ought to be paid not to particular words alone, but to the general idea or the turn of thought. For the sake of the English reader we shall give the English translation rather than the Greek. Rev. i. 1, "God gave," comp. John vii. 16, xii. 49; i. 2, "signified," c. J. xii. 33; xviii. 32; i. 16, "had," in sense of possession, c. J. xiv. 21, 30; i. 16, "hand," as hand of power, c. J. x. 28; i. 18, "the living one," c. J. i. 4, v. 26; ii. 7, "eat," c. J. vi. 51; ii. 13, "my name," c. J. *passim*; ii. 17, "knoweth," in sense of the knowledge of experience, c. J. iv. 32; ii. 21, "*wiltoth* not to repent," c. J. v. 6, vi. 21; ii. 22, "except they repent of *her* works," a remarkable expression, c. J. ix. 4; iii. 10, "earth," as opposed to heaven, c. J. iii. 12; iv. 2, "set," c. J. ii. 6; v. 8, idea of fulness, c. J. ii. 7, xix. 29, xxi. 11; v. 10, unexpected use of third instead of first person, c. J. xvii. 3; vii. 9, "a great multitude," c. J. xii. 12; ix. 1, "well of the abyss," c. J. iv. 11, 12; x. 4, trial before knowledge, c. J. ii. 22, xii. 16; xi. 2, "cast without,"

c. J. ix. 34; xi. 13, "names" used to express persons, c. use of "name" in the Gospel; xii. 5, "of man's sex," c. *Commentary in loc.* and J. xvi. 21; xii. 1-6, c. J. i. 1-5; xiii. 14, "make an image," c. *Commentary in loc.* and J. viii. 44; xiv. 5, "lie," c. J. viii. 44; xv. 4, "fear," c. *Commentary in loc.* and J. v. 20; xvii. 8, "ascend," "go," c. *Commentary in loc.*; xix. 3, "a second time," c. J. iv. 54; xx. 15, c. *Commentary in loc.*; xxi. 2, "prepared," c. J. xiv. 3; xxi. 3, "tabernacle," c. J. i. 14; xxi. 6, c. *Commentary in loc.*; xxi. 8, "liars," c. J. viii. 44; xxi. 25, "night," c. J. xiii. 30; xxii. 5, c. *Commentary in loc.*; xxii. 7, "keepeth," c. J. xiv. 15; xxii. 11, c. *Commentary in loc.* Other illustrations of the same point may be found in the *Intr. to the N. T.*, by Dr. Davidson, who shows great fairness in the matter, and whose conclusion is that, "after every reasonable deduction, enough remains to prove that the correspondences are not accidental, and either betray the same author or show that the writer of the book was influenced by the ideas and language of the other."—i. p. 332.



2. *The Structure* of the two books.—Of the structure of the Apocalypse we have already spoken at considerable length.<sup>1</sup> It remains only to ask whether, or to what extent, the same structural characteristics are to be traced in the fourth Gospel.

(1) The similarity appears in the dominating power of certain numbers. Of the number seven it is unnecessary to say more than has been said already.<sup>2</sup> But the number three still claims attention. The part played by it in the Gospel is hardly less worthy of notice than its part in the Apocalypse. Upon this point Keim will probably be allowed to be an unexceptionable witness. In his *Life of Jesus* he speaks of the trichotomy of the Gospel as lying at the foundation of its plan, connecting this, whether rightly or wrongly it is unnecessary to ask, partly with Jewish methods of conception, partly with the Divine mystery of the Trinity. "Jesus," he says, "is three times in Galilee, three times in Judæa, twice three feasts fall within the period of His working, especially three passovers, at its beginning, its middle, its end. He performs three miracles in Galilee, and three in Jerusalem. Twice three days He is occupied in the neighbourhood of John. Three days mark the history of Lazarus, six the Passion week. Three words are spoken on the Cross. Three times did He appear as the risen Saviour."<sup>3</sup> Even better examples might have been found, such as the

<sup>1</sup> See *Lectures*, iii.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Jesus*, i. p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> See *Lectures*, iii. part 2.

threefold division of chap. ix., verses 1-12, 13-34, 35-41; or the three figures in the earlier part of chap. x., the shepherd, the door, the good shepherd; or the three questioners in chap. xiv.; or the three parts of the high-priestly prayer in chap. xvii., verses 1-5, 6-19, 20-26; or the three confessions of the glory of Jesus made by Peter, Philip, and Nathanael in chap. i.; or the tripartite division of that chapter, verses 1-18, 19-34, 35-51; or a similar division of the first of these three sections, verses 1-5, 6-13, 14-18; or a similar division of verse 1. Many other illustrations of the same point might be given, but those mentioned are enough to show that the same tendency to group his materials under the influence of the number three, which so strongly marks the writer of the Apocalypse, marks also the author of the Gospel.

(2) The principle of *contrasts* appearing in so marked a manner in the Apocalypse appears also in the Gospel. Upon this point it may be enough to quote the language of Dr. Davidson when he says: 'The contrasts in the Gospel are striking. Light and darkness, God and the world, heaven and earth, spirit and flesh, life and death, truth and error, love and hatred, the eternal and transitory, Christ and the world, Christ and the devil, the Church and the world, the children of the world and the children of the devil, present Christianity attaining to victory through contest.'<sup>1</sup> No reader of the Gospel indeed can hesitate to acknowledge that, although its contrasts may not

<sup>1</sup> *Intr.* ii. p. 348.

be exhibited in such minute detail as those of the Apocalypse, the tendency to see the kingdom of heaven standing over against the kingdom of this world is as strong and deep in the one book as in the other. Nor is the ironical or mocking contrast which we so often meet with in the Apocalypse wanting in the Gospel. A striking illustration of this appears in its description of Jesus on the Cross.<sup>1</sup> The particulars of the scene here presented are in perfect harmony with those of the other Evangelists, but a careful study of them is sufficient to show that they are grouped under the dominating influence of the idea of the Passover. Few will deny that on the Cross Jesus is the Paschal Lamb. This being the case, He is there that Lamb, not in the moment of death, but at the later stage when it was prepared for, and eaten at, the paschal meal, and the Evangelist sees the Jews around the Cross celebrating an inverted and contorted passover.<sup>2</sup> The view thus indicated throws a fresh and striking light upon the whole conduct and fate of those who at the time were crucifying their Messiah and King. At chap. xviii. 28 they had not entered into the judgment hall of Pilate "lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover." They had not eaten it then. Amidst the tumult and stormy passions of that dreadful morning when had they an opportunity

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xix. 28-37.

in the *Expositor*, July and August

<sup>2</sup> The writer has endeavoured to bring this fully out in two papers

1877, on "St. John's view of Jesus on the Cross."

of eating it? St. John does not tell us that they found one. Rather is the whole narrative so constructed, so full of close, rapid, passionate action, that it is impossible to fix upon any point at which we can insert their eating, until it was too late in the day to make it legal. *May it not be that they found no opportunity?* They lost their passover. Lost it? Nay, the Evangelist seems to say, they found a passover. Follow them with me to the Cross, and, in their cruel mockeries of the true Paschal Lamb, let us see the righteous dealings of God, as He makes these mockeries take the shape of a passover of judgment, of added sin, and deepened shame.

(3) The principle of *prolepsis or anticipation* appearing in the Apocalypse<sup>1</sup> appears also in the Gospel. Thus we have repeated anticipatory allusions to the desire of the Jews to "kill Jesus,"<sup>2</sup> allusions which, made long before the time when the deed was to be executed, the Jews themselves disown. So also in chap. xi. 2 the mention of Mary's act as that by which she is especially distinguished anticipates the narrative of the act itself at chap. xii. 3; while in chap. xii. 7 the anointing of Christ and the allusion to His burial anticipate what actually takes place in chap. xix. 39-42.

(4) *Double representations of the same thing* meet us in the Gospel, the second representation standing in a climactic relation to the first. We have already alluded

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, iii. part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. vii. 1, 19, 20, 25; viii. 37, 40.

to this characteristic of the Apocalypse,<sup>1</sup> and have only to show that it also marks the Gospel. Let us take an incident related in the first chapter, verses 29, 35, 36.

In the first of these verses we are told that "on the morrow he (the Baptist) seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" In the last two we read, "Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!" Why mention a circumstance of this kind twice? and that, too, when the Evangelist feels that he has so much to relate, that were he to tell it all, "even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."<sup>2</sup> If there is no difference between the two statements, there seems to be a waste of space; if there is a difference, wherein does the difference lie? We have before us one of the double pictures of St. John. It is of peculiar importance to him to bring out that aspect of Jesus in which He appears as the Lamb of God. At the close of His earthly career Jesus will be seen to be so.<sup>3</sup> But what He was at the close He was also at the beginning, beneath all the lowliness of His lot,—the Divine Lord who changes not. The Baptist had, in all probability, often spoken of Him as the Lamb of God. The Evangelist fixes upon two occasions when he did so, and the repetition lends force to the declaration. More, however, is necessary in order that the incident may fall within

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, iii. part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxi. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xix. 36.

the range of that principle of structure which we are considering. In the mention of the second when compared with the first there must be climax. Climax is at once traceable here. At verse 29 the Baptist appears to have been alone, and his words have the form of a soliloquy. At verse 35 two of his disciples stand beside him, and his words are intended for them; they "heard him speak." Again, no effect is connected with the first utterance; at the second "the two disciples followed Jesus."<sup>1</sup> Once more let us look at the exclamation in itself. At first sight it may seem as if climax failed, as if the Baptist's words were richer and fuller the first time than the second. In reality the reverse is the case. Let us remember that the paschal lamb lies at the bottom of the figure. The words in verse 29 therefore, "which taketh away the sin of the world," limit us to one aspect of the benefits conferred by that great sacrifice, which contained in it all the ideas of Israel's sacrificial system as a whole. They bring out the pardon and removal of sin, but nothing further. Let us drop the addition, and dwell only on the shorter form, "Behold the Lamb of God," and everything included in the thought of the paschal lamb comes into view. Above all, we have now room for the highest, the culminating, idea of the paschal sacrifice—that of nourishment, of food for the life, of the feast as a communion and fellowship with God. The second of the two statements, brief as it is, is far wider and more comprehensive than the first. We take

<sup>1</sup> Verse 37.

another passage, chap. xii. 1-19. In this passage a double picture of the reception given to Jesus, in the remarkable circumstances in which He was at the moment placed, arrests our attention. It is of importance to observe that, when introduced to us at the beginning of the chapter, Jesus had not only been condemned to death by the highest religious authorities of the land,<sup>1</sup> but that "they had given a commandment that, if any man knew where He was, he should show it, that they might take Him."<sup>2</sup> The virulence of His persecutors has thus been indicated with more than ordinary force; and the object of the first nineteen verses of chap. xii. is to illustrate the fact that, although thus outwardly defeated, He is still the Conqueror; that in the lowest stage of His humiliation He draws to Himself the affection and admiration of men. This object is attained by means of the two pictures, the anointing in Bethany and the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. That these two scenes really form a double picture designed to illustrate the same thought is clear from different considerations. On the one hand, both are obviously an act of homage to Jesus. On the other, Jesus is brought before us in both with the doom of death resting upon Him. More than this, it is to be noticed that with the thought of the death of Jesus is distinctly combined in both the thought of His power over the grave. In both Lazarus is associated with Him. In the first he is actually present, and that as one raised from the dead;

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xi. 50, 53.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xi. 57.

“Jesus,” it is said, “came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead”; “Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with Him.”<sup>1</sup> In the second, Lazarus raised is present to the minds of the people; “The multitude therefore that was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness”; “For this cause also the multitude went and met Him, for that they heard that He had done this sign.”<sup>2</sup> The sentence of death, in short, is in each of the two pictures upon Jesus; and in each He is the Resurrection and the Life. The striking combination of these ideas in both, not less than the homage expressed in both, proves the unity of the two scenes. While, however, the principles marking the two tributes of adoration are thus essentially one, and while the two may be regarded as parts of the same tableau, the idea to be expressed comes before us in the second at a higher stage than in the first. At the opening of the first Jesus is indeed the selected victim upon which sentence of death has been passed. But before the second opens He has been anointed for His burial.<sup>3</sup> In the first He is only at Bethany, in the quiet village, perhaps in the quiet house, where He had so often rested, and in which friendship and love ministered to Him consolation under His many trials. In the second He has bidden farewell to rest, hospitality, and comfort; and has entered upon His last short journey to Jerusalem, where He is to die. Death is nearer now. In the

<sup>1</sup> Verses 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Verses 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 7.



first He is borne witness to by a number of Jews from Jerusalem who had "seen Lazarus";<sup>1</sup> in the second the witness is borne by a multitude, brought together from all quarters, who had only "heard"<sup>2</sup> and yet had believed; and we have but to look at chap. xx. 29 to see how much more valuable is the latter than the former faith. In the first the tribute paid is a silent act of reverence and love; in the second it is a loud acclaim of praise,<sup>3</sup> while Jesus Himself appears not as a longed-for guest, but as Israel's eagerly expected King.<sup>4</sup> In the first the hope of the chief priests and Pharisees, that they will be able to accomplish their end, has been high;<sup>5</sup> in the second they begin to despair, and their plot seems in danger of being baffled.<sup>6</sup> In the first many Jews are led to faith;<sup>7</sup> in the second "Lo; the world is gone after Him."<sup>8</sup> Finally, we are not told that the disciples had any difficulty in comprehending the first; but the second belongs to that higher order of things which can only be understood when light has been thrown upon it by time and the wonderful events of Providence.<sup>9</sup> The climactic relation of the two pictures cannot be mistaken.<sup>10</sup>

(5) A fifth point demanding a few moments' consideration is the use of *Episode*. Enough was

<sup>1</sup> Verse 9.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 18.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 13.

<sup>4</sup> Verse 15.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. xi. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Verse 19.

<sup>7</sup> Verse 11.

<sup>8</sup> Verse 19.

<sup>9</sup> Verse 16.

<sup>10</sup> For other illustrations of the point we refer to three papers in the *Expositor*, second series, vol. iv. pp. 264, 368, 430.

formerly said of the Episodes of the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> Their existence is denied by none. But we have an unquestionable Episode in the Gospel (chap. iii. 22-36), introduced, exactly as the apocalyptic episodes are introduced, in the middle of a section, and with the view of preparing us for a greater manifestation of mercy (in the Apocalypse of judgment) immediately to follow. Another such Episode is probably to be found in chap. x. 22-42, the middle point of it being verse 28, and the Episode as a whole being intended to prepare us for the wonderful event to be recorded in the next chapter.

Characteristics of the kind now illustrated are of great importance in helping us to come to a conclusion upon the identity or difference of authorship of two different books. They are not of an outward kind. They lead us into the depths of the author's nature, into the inmost frame and habit of his soul. The mere language of a writer, indeed, his mere *delectus verborum*, may frequently in no small degree guide us to a determination upon the point at issue. Yet the argument seems to possess far greater strength when it is founded less upon the words themselves than upon the *manner* of the man which they display. A man may change his thought and, with this, the words in which he utters it. He is not so likely to change the mould or framework within which all his thinking is conducted. This becomes like his walk or the tones of his voice. He may walk faster or slower; he may

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, p. 125.

speak more loudly or more softly ; there is in each case something beneath that we recognise, even at a distance. However great his transition from one set of ideas to another, the fashion in which he presents them, except when under the influence of special circumstances, will most probably be the same. More particularly if, as we are often told, we are not to think of deliberate and skilful imitation in the early Christian age ; if there was a simplicity in writers and a credulity in readers which then made the task of fictitious authorship easier than it is now, the value of these inner marks of identity is greatly raised. Two different men, writing with a long interval of time between them, and in entirely different circumstances, could hardly have resembled one another so closely in the whole tone and habit of their minds.

III. *The Teaching of the Apocalypse and of the fourth Gospel.*—In considering this, it is impossible to pass in review the whole teaching of the two books. We confine ourselves to a very few leading and characteristic points.<sup>1</sup>

1. The teaching of each regarding *the Saviour and His kingdom.*—Of Christ Himself little need be said. It is allowed by all inquirers that the most marked coincidence is apparent in the Christology ; and the admission, though hardly in every respect correct, is enough to justify us in passing rapidly over this

<sup>1</sup> A minute comparison of the teaching of the two books on special points will be found in Gebhardt's *Doctrine of the Apocalypse*, translated in Clark's *Foreign*

*Theological Library*. We take, for the most part at least, a different course from the one followed in that book.

part of the subject. In addition, therefore, to what has been already said of the distinctive appellations, "The Word," or "The Word of God," and "The Lamb," applied to Jesus in these two books of the New Testament alone, it is enough to recall the Divine attributes everywhere ascribed to Him in both; the prominence given to the conception of Him as a shepherd, a conception only distantly alluded to in the earlier Gospels, but brought out fully in St. John; the importance attached to the idea of His being the faithful and true Witness; His bestowing "the hidden manna," that is Himself,<sup>1</sup> equivalent to the "true bread out of heaven," which He is;<sup>2</sup> His dwelling among His saints; His supplying them with the water of life; and His being the Bridegroom of His Church. The existence of these conceptions in the Apocalypse, and that too in a marked degree, is not denied; and they incontestably lead us to the thoughts of the fourth rather than any of the other Gospels.

No doubt it is still urged that there is a difference in the mode by which the "glory" belonging to Christ in our two books is made manifest in each. As revealed in the Apocalypse it is said to be outward might and dominion; while in the Gospel it is revealed only to the inward eye, or to the faith which beholds in the Redeemer the sum of Divine grace and truth.<sup>3</sup> To the same effect Lücke: "The Apocalyptist brings

<sup>1</sup> *Comm.* on Rev. ii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 32, 35.

<sup>3</sup> Frommann, *Der Johann. Lehrb.* p. 545; comp. Davidson's *Intr.* i. p. 335.

especially forward the external development and completion of the Divine kingdom and judgment in the great convulsions of the world and nature, while the quiet internal development and completion springing from the power of the Divine word and spirit of Christ in humanity passes into the background. The eschatological process which, according to him, begins with the first manifestation of Christ,<sup>1</sup> is viewed by him more according to its external historical appearance than the inward ground of the oppositions which it unfolds; more in its external epochs, progresses, and resting points than in the internal continuity of its development in the spiritual life of humanity; more in the external destruction of the world's powers of evil than in their conquest and condemnation from within."<sup>2</sup> Baur adopts these representations, and sums up the whole argument in the following words: "The difference, therefore, lies mainly in this, that the mode of thinking and the whole representation is so internal in the Gospel, and so external in the Apocalypse."<sup>3</sup> Holtzmann follows.<sup>4</sup>

The contrasts thus alluded to undoubtedly exist to a large extent, but the statement of them in these extracts is exaggerated; while Lücke, in referring Rev. xii. 1, etc., to the historical Christ, has failed to catch the real meaning of the passage.<sup>5</sup> Nothing indeed is more strikingly characteristic of the visions of the Apocalypse than the manner in which, up to the very

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xii. 1, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Versuch*, p. 719.

<sup>3</sup> *D. K. E.* p. 317.

<sup>4</sup> *Eint.* p. 421.

<sup>5</sup> *Comm. in loc.*

last, the Saviour Himself is withheld from view. In the visions constituting by far the larger portion of the whole, He is not once introduced to us in His outward glory; and it is not until we reach chap. xix. that He comes forth in the sight of the nations. Up to that time the world has not beheld Him. Even if we adopt Lücke's interpretation of chap. xii., He was in the instant of His birth caught up unto God and unto His throne.<sup>1</sup> From His unseen place in heaven He has directed the contest and exercised His rule. No hostile eye has witnessed the glory which belongs to Him. Even His people do not behold it until the final stage of the conflict is reached. St. John himself has seen it in the first chapter, yet only in the spirit;<sup>2</sup> they have not. It is not as those upon whom outward glory has shone that they are spoken of, but as those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."<sup>3</sup> The glory of the slain Lamb is all that they have seen; and is not that the very glory which meets us in the beginning of the Gospel, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from a Father, full of grace and truth"?<sup>4</sup>

Let us turn to Christ's kingdom. So far as the idea of "development" enters into the Apocalypse, it is fundamentally the opposite of what it is represented to be in the passages above quoted. Instead of having

<sup>1</sup> Verse 5.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 10.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. vii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> John i. 14.

only an "external" character, it is really, in the strictest sense of the word, in the first place internal, both as regards the piety to be blessed and the impiety to be doomed. In the visions of the book there is no *external development* whatever of the Divine kingdom, as if that kingdom were making an outward progress in the world, and gradually bringing one part of mankind after another under its sway. There are no successive chronological epochs and periods within which the people of God gain a more prominent position in the world and inflict more striking defeats upon their enemies. Only one great epoch is taken note of, and that the whole period extending from the First to the Second Coming of the Lord. This is the three and a half years, the forty-two months, the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, so frequently referred to. The period of the Seals covers it all; so does the period of the Trumpets; so does the period of the Bowls. All these periods extend from the beginning to the end of the Church's militant history. Within that space of time the members of Christ's flock are from the first ideally complete. The names of all of them are written in the Lamb's book of life. God has known all that are His, and has kept them all in the hollow of His hand. There is indeed a progress of things within this period, implied in the climactic character of the three great series of visions. But the *development* alike on the part of the Church and of her enemies is internal, not external. It is a development of the one to ever higher stages of meet-

ness for the accomplishment of Christian hope, of the other to ever-increasing ripeness for eternal woe. Development of any other kind we not only have not, but cannot have. The plan of the book will not permit it; for that plan is not to trace the Church's growth as she rises from her mustard-seed beginning into a mighty tree: it is to take her from the first as ideally complete, and to show us by a series of pictures rising one above another how, as the world hastens to its end, her trials increase, grace to sustain her increases, and judgment on her foes increases also.

In so far again as there does exist a contrast between calmly working grace and external manifestation of might, such a contrast lies necessarily in the object of the two books. The contrary impression has arisen from the idea that the aim of the Apocalypse is to set forth a history in continuation of that presented in the fourth Gospel. Its real object is rather to set forth the manifestation of an idea to be realised in history after the work of grace delineated in the Gospel is supposed to have been accomplished. It deals with the Redeemer not so much in an earlier stage of a continuous development as in a stage altogether different. In the Gospel we have the Christ in His humiliation, in the Apocalypse in His exaltation; in the former as He was a sufferer on earth, in the latter as He is glorified in heaven; in the one as He carries on the educative process by which light is raised to brighter light and darkness deepened into thicker darkness, in the other as He brings to view



the final issues of the education He has given. But this leads necessarily to external manifestations, and anything of that kind, therefore, appearing in the Apocalypse, proceeds not from a difference of authorship, but from a difference of object in the one author of both books.

2. The teaching of both regarding *the field of the Saviour's work, and the precise nature of the work He has to do in it.*—Nothing is more strikingly characteristic of the Apocalypse than the light in which it presents this point to us. From the first vision to the last there is the most marked antithesis between the Church and the world, between the followers and the opponents of the Lamb. There is no neutral ground. All men are divided into the two great sections, light or darkness, truth or falsehood. What we see of them is not a passing from darkness into light, or from light into darkness, but a brightening of the already existent light and a deepening of the already existent darkness. It may at first sight strike us with extreme surprise that a book, intended to be the stay and comfort of the Church amidst her trials, and written when as yet she had made no great progress in the world, should in all its visions not possess one to tell her of that increase in the number of her adherents, of that missionary success, which should reward her labours. Yet such is undoubtedly the fact. The visions of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls relate to the same field. No extension of the Church's borders is even incidentally alluded to under any of them till the very end is

reached ; and even then "the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," not by the conversion, but by the removal from the field, of the Church's foes. There is no change in the sphere in which the action of these three great series of visions is played out. The same thing may be said of the visions of comfort interposed at various points of the delineation, of the sealing and harping visions coming before the seventh Seal, the measuring and witnessing visions coming before the seventh Trumpet, and the vision of the Lamb upon Mount Zion surrounded by His saints coming before the seven Bowls. The field of blessing is not enlarged ; the Church is ideally as strong at the beginning as at the end. There is no passing of darkness into light ; there is no sinking of light into darkness. There is ever-brightening light ; there is ever-deepening darkness. The two lines are from first to last distinct, antithetical, opposed.

The very same method of representation marks the Gospel and the Epistles of St. John. In the field of the Saviour's working there presented to us mankind are again divided into two great classes, one of which has already a receptivity for the truth, while the other resolutely opposes it ; and the work of Jesus consists in a separation of the two classes, and in *making manifest the tendencies of each*, rather than in bringing the one class over to the other. The general impression conveyed to us by the earlier Gospels of the state of those not yet interested in Christ, is that they are

miserable in their sinfulness, and are to be led by a gracious Redeemer to the happiness which they need and for which they long. Not that their sinfulness is unthought of, but it is not so prominent as their misery. They "labour and are heavy laden"; they "faint and are scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd"; they suffer from "infirmities" and "sicknesses" which Jesus bore; they stand in need of the "rest" and healing which the Good Physician alone can give.<sup>1</sup> To all of them, therefore, Jesus addresses Himself as if they occupied substantially the same ground. On all He has equally to bestow the blessings of His salvation, if they will not now, after they have listened to Him, cast away His offered gift.

St. John's point of view in the fourth Gospel is entirely different. Not, indeed, that the Salvation to be found in Jesus is not designed to be universal, that there is even one who may not be saved if he will only turn to the light that shines around him, and let that light shine within him. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life"; "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."<sup>2</sup> Nor, again, that men are considered as so essentially identified with the two classes into which they are divided as to deprive them of responsibility for the reception or rejection of the truth. It is conclusive against any such idea that,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 28, 29; ix. 36; Mark ii. 17; Luke v. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. iii. 16; xii. 47.

as regards the one class, St. John says in the very opening of his Gospel, "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God";<sup>1</sup> as regards the other, "This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men *loved* the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil."<sup>2</sup> In both cases moral responsibility is implied. Still the fact remains that there are two classes, and these not simply formed *after* the work of Christ has tried and proved the world but *before* it, and while the Logos is not yet incarnate. Almost the very first words of the Gospel introduce us to this conception. We do not see only a world of sinners, all equally alienated from God, all in that earliest stage of natural sinfulness to which no moral discipline has been as yet applied. There has been such a discipline, although its history is not unfolded to us, and we now witness the result.<sup>3</sup> From the first two classes appear; on the one side there is alienation, deep, deliberate, confirmed, "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness overcame it not";<sup>4</sup> on the other side there are those who "received" the Word incarnate, and who because they

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> In considering the difficult topic here before us it may be well for our readers to take along with them the following words of Dean Alford. He is commenting on John iii. 17, and showing that that text is not in contradiction to ix. 39, "for judgment I am come into this world," and he

says, "The *κρίμα* there, as here, results from the separation of mankind into two classes—those who will and those who will not come to the light; and that result itself is not the *purpose why* the Son of God came into the world, but is evolved in the accomplishment of the higher purpose, viz. love, and the salvation of men."

<sup>4</sup> Verse 5.

received Him had that faith implanted in them by which they became the children of God.<sup>1</sup> And this antithesis of light and darkness, of truth and falsehood, of life and death, runs throughout the whole Gospel. It knows only of two classes of men represented by these terms; and, from the moment these classes are introduced to us, they are completely separated from one another. There is the class of those who receive the Saviour, and of those who do not receive Him; of those who recognise His glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and of those who do not recognise it—mark the emphatic “we” in chap. i. 14; of those who know Him, and of those who know Him not; of those who see, and of those who are blind; of those who are the children of God, and of those who are of their father the devil. Nor is this antithesis conceived of as an antithesis of states into which men gradually rise or sink, but as all along fully formed, as *chosen* by such as respectively belong to either side, as developed and mature. In short, the contrast between the followers and the enemies of Christ, between the Church and the world, is from the first and always presented to us in the sharpest and most distinctive lines. The separation is decided. The two have no point of contact with each other. Various circumstances connected with St. John’s mode of speaking illustrate what has now been said. Let us advert to one or two of them.

It is thus, *e.g.*, that, in his writings, even false

<sup>1</sup> Verse 12.

brethren are not those who have fallen away from the Church. They never belonged to it. They were the world in the Church. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us."<sup>1</sup> It is thus that he recalls the words of Jesus regarding Judas, "Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil? Now He spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve."<sup>2</sup> Judas is to outward appearance one of the twelve, but he really belongs to an altogether different class—he is a devil. It is thus that the present condition of man is viewed without heed being given to the fact that the righteous may fall away, that the wicked may be converted and saved—"He that believeth on Him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God"; "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."<sup>3</sup> Above all, it is thus that St. John seems often to look wholly away, or to bring Jesus Himself before us as looking away, from some of the most important steps in what we should call the conversion of the sinner, and that not a few of his texts present in this light serious difficulties to the interpreter. "He that is *of God* heareth the words of

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 70, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. iii. 18, 36.

God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God"; "But ye believe not, *because ye are not of My sheep*"; "Every one that is *of the truth* heareth My voice"; "They are *of the world*: therefore speak they as of the world, and the world heareth them. We are *of God*: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is *not of God* heareth not us"<sup>1</sup>—all, words in which the expressions "of the truth," "of God," "of the world" must be referred, not to a stage of the spiritual history when Christ's words have been either received or rejected, but to a stage anterior to that, when the bias to the one course or the other is thought of as already existing in the soul. The spiritual history of man is in such passages, taken up at a point earlier than that in which the eye only rests on the natural disinclination of all to godliness. Man is viewed as if he were marked by a predisposition to either good or evil; as if some were from the first inclined to receive, and others to reject, the full communication of the light that shines in Christ; as if the germ of the ultimate result were previously existing in the soul; and as if the true point of departure for our consideration of what we are were that where the divinely-implanted love of the truth is the foundation for higher blessings, where the devil-implanted love of a lie, and the free clinging to it, is the foundation for final doom. We need hardly say that, in all this, there is not the slightest essential divergence from the doctrine of the universal corruption of human nature, and of our

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 47; x. 26; xviii. 37; 1 John iv. 5. 6.

entire dependence upon the grace and spirit of God for the very earliest dawns of the Divine life within us. That doctrine is set before us by St. John as distinctly as by the other writers of the New Testament. It is simply a mode of viewing the matter peculiar to him. It marks him out at once from the rest of the Apostles; and it is so essentially embedded in his nature that it colours his whole language, and is interwoven with his whole style of thought.

The antithesis now noted leads to a corresponding modification in the aspect of Christ's work in the Gospel. That work consists not so much in converting all classes as in separating the two of which we have spoken, and in cultivating in the one the germ which is to issue in the possession of life, in visiting judicially in the other the germ which is to end in death in its deepest and fullest sense. It becomes a work of sifting. The unbelieving Jews grow more and more confirmed in their obstinacy; the believing disciples are united to their Master in bonds constantly closer and more endearing. To the one He can only speak in terms of severe reproach, "How can ye believe"? "Ye are from beneath"; "Ye are of your father the devil";<sup>1</sup> the other are in ever-increasing degree His friends; He washes their feet; He addresses to them His most consolatory discourses; at the Supper one of them leans upon His bosom; till at length, in His last intercessory prayer, the separa-

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. v. 44; viii. 23, 44.



tion is indicated in the most solemn and awe-inspiring manner, "I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest me out of the world: I pray for them, I pray not for the world."<sup>1</sup>

3. *The appropriation of Christ's redemption and the relation of believers to their Lord.*—Upon this point St. John has undoubtedly much that is common to the other writers of the New Testament, but there is also much that is peculiar to himself. In the fourth Gospel and in the first Epistle of St. John salvation is such an appropriation of life in Christ that believers are identified with Him. They and He are in one another, as the branches of the vine are in the stem and the stem is in the branches. They are placed in His relation towards God; and, now that He has gone to the Father, they have to take up and carry on His work in the world. What He was, nay, what He is, they are; one with Him in privilege, in duty, in suffering, in essential though as yet unmanifested glory.

To quote passages from the fourth Gospel in proof of what has been said would be an almost endless task. The whole Gospel is penetrated by, and filled with, the idea. Nowhere is it more strikingly brought out than in the Prologue, its place there, in verses which contain a summary of the book, lending it peculiar importance,—“But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God.”<sup>2</sup> “Received” is more than “accepted,” for it indicates

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xvii. 6, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. i. 12.

not simply the accepting will but the possession gained; "children" is more than "sons," for sonship may be that of a mere adoption, while the expression used leads to the thought of actual (though spiritual) paternity; and for the words "gave" and "right" (*ἐξουσία*) we may fitly compare chap. v. 26, 27, "For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so *gave* He to the Son to have life in Himself: and He *gave* Him authority (*ἐξουσίαν*) to execute judgment, because He is a Son of man." <sup>1</sup>

The keynote thus struck in the Prologue is continued throughout the body of the Gospel. In particular we see it in the remarkable use of the words *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς* applied to believers, to which the Authorised Version does so much injustice,<sup>2</sup> and which are obviously intended to bring out that independence of standing, rising out of dependence, which is granted to the believer when he is identified with his Lord. We see it in the foot-washing, where the words, "Know ye not what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example (*ὑπόδειγμα*), that ye also should do as I have done to you," <sup>3</sup> when viewed in the spirit of the whole passage, express much more than the power of example. Above all we see it in the language of the last discourses of chaps. xiv.-xvi., and in the

<sup>1</sup> Marginal and correct reading of Revised Version.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. v. 42; vi. 53; comp. v. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xiii. 12-15.

high-priestly prayer of chap. xvii. These are full of words of Jesus which can only be understood on the principle for which we now contend.<sup>1</sup> The late Dr. Candlish has spoken of the “wonderfully gracious identification” thus established by our Lord between His disciples and Himself,<sup>2</sup> and the authority of that eminent theologian will be of weight with many who might otherwise shrink from the word in the connexion in which we have used it.

One thing is clear, that this identity or identification of the members of Christ’s Body with their Head, extending as it does not only to their relation to the Father, but to their work in the world, and to sufferings there endured even unto death,<sup>3</sup> is one of the most characteristic parts of the teaching of the fourth Gospel.

When we turn to the Apocalypse the same teaching meets us. It is true that at the time when that book was written Christ had gone to the Father. St. John had not forgotten that in his first Epistle,<sup>4</sup> and he cannot forget it now, because it is with the glorified Redeemer that his visions deal. But with that Redeemer as He had been on earth, and ideally with Him as He is now in heaven, believers are everywhere identified. We meet the thought in the Prologue, where we are taught that, through Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His blood, we have

<sup>1</sup> Comp. chaps. xiv. 19, 20 ; xv. 3, 4, 5 ; xvi. 26 ; xvii. 8, 18, 22, 23, 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Fatherhood of God*, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. 1 John iii. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. iv. 17.

been made "a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father,"<sup>1</sup> He Himself being everywhere throughout the book Priest and King; and where too the writer describes himself as "partaker" with the churches "in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus."<sup>2</sup> In every later description of believers the same tone of thought is observable. We know that the "garment down to the feet" with which the glorious Personage who appeared to the Seer in chap. i. was, as a priestly garment, white, and it is unnecessary to quote texts telling us of the white garments of the redeemed. The people of God everywhere "*have* the word of God and the testimony of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> Jesus is the "faithful witness," and they are the "witnesses of Jesus."<sup>4</sup> Jesus says of Himself, "I overcame," and they also "overcome."<sup>5</sup> Jesus has "works" and they have "works."<sup>6</sup> Jesus "walks" in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and they shall "walk" with Him.<sup>7</sup> "As a shepherd shall Jesus tend all the nations with a sceptre of iron," and the believer, having had authority given him over the nations, shall "tend them with a sceptre of iron."<sup>8</sup> Jesus has His "new name" written upon Him, and that new name shall be written upon His people.<sup>9</sup> Jesus having completed His work received the reward of victory, and He Himself says to Laodicea, "He that

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. i. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Chaps. i. 2; vi. 9; xii. 17; xix. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Chaps. i. 5; ii. 13; xvii. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Chaps. iii. 21; ii. 7, 11, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Chaps. ii. 2, 19, 26, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Chaps. ii. 1; iii. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Chaps. xii. 5; ii. 27.

<sup>9</sup> Chaps. xix. 12; iii. 12.

overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne.”<sup>1</sup> Even now in the midst of all their trials the saints “reign upon the earth,”<sup>2</sup> and in the power of the resurrection life which they enjoy in a risen and glorified Redeemer they “live and reign with Christ a thousand years.”<sup>3</sup>

It is, however, in struggle, suffering, and death that the identification of Christ and His people comes out most strongly in the Apocalypse. The degree of this is indeed dependent upon the special interpretation of several important passages of the book, and it is possible that all may not accept the interpretation given of these in the previous volume.<sup>4</sup> But the more carefully that interpretation is considered, the more, we persuade ourselves, will it prove itself to be correct. Struggle, suffering, and a martyr-death are, in the view of the Seer, the portion of all believers. “Follow thou Me” means not merely, Be obedient to My commandments, imitate My character, but follow Me to shame and reproach and persecution and the cross. He who would be Christ’s disciple must drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism. Then, the Lord’s in death, He will also be His in glorious, everlasting, life.

There is no need to deny that various points of connexion may be traced between such teaching as this and the teaching of other books of the New Testa-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. v. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xx. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Lectures*, v. p. 167.

ment than the writings of St. John. Our contention simply is that this style of thought has a precision, a clearness, and a fulness in the fourth Gospel and in the Apocalypse which it has nowhere else. Whether or not the person was the same, the mind that dictated these two books was one.

4. *The termination of the saints' earthly course and their entrance upon their eternal reward.*—What has to be said upon this point will be to a considerable degree dependent for its force upon an admission that the manner in which we have proposed to interpret the reign of the thousand years is just.<sup>1</sup> Yet not wholly so; and it will be well for the reader to mark carefully how much hangs upon that interpretation, and how much not. The first point that meets us, for example, is only partially connected with it. The life given by the Lord to the members of His Body is of such a kind that it rises superior to both death and judgment; or rather the believer does not die in the sense in which we know death, and he does not enter into judgment. In the Gospel of St. John the first of these points is indicated with great distinctness by the words of our Lord to Martha at her brother's grave: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die."<sup>2</sup> To a similar effect are such words as those of Jesus in John iv. 14, which ought to be translated, neither as in the Authorised nor in the Revised Version, but

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Lectures*, vi. p. 210, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xi. 25.

“The water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of springing water, unto eternal life”; and the meaning is that the life referred to, not simply attained in the remote future, begins and is actually present now in every one who receives the living water.<sup>1</sup> The conception, in short, of the Gospel of St. John is that when we believe we pass wholly out of one sphere into another, out of the evil one into God, out of death into life.<sup>2</sup> This life is in its own nature eternal. It is the life of God, the life of Christ. The believer “has” it. It is “in himself.” The result is necessary. He in whom such a life is formed cannot die in the ordinary sense. Even the sword or the flame cannot touch his true life. Like his Lord he may “bow his head and deliver up his spirit,”<sup>3</sup> but he does not die. Such is the teaching of the Gospel, and on its characteristic nature it is needless to enlarge.

The teaching of the Apocalypse is precisely similar. “Death” is never spoken of in connexion with Christ’s faithful ones. They may be “slaughtered,” as were the true sons of the old Dispensation,<sup>4</sup> but that death, a sacrificial one (*σφάζειν*), only sets the true life free. They may be “beheaded” (or slain with the axe), like those who are afterwards enthroned in the millennial bliss, but though thus cruelly put to death they “live and reign with Christ a thousand years.”<sup>5</sup> True, we read in chap. xiv. 13, “And I heard a voice from

<sup>1</sup> Comp. chap. vi. 47, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. v. 24 ; 1 John v. 11.

<sup>3</sup> John xix. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. vi. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. xx. 6.

heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth"; but the context leads us to the thought of troubles and persecutions in the midst of which they die, and the words "in the Lord," when interpreted in the spirit of the book, seem to imply that the death referred to is such a death as His. The expression, therefore, "die in the Lord," does not bear that sense of quiet falling asleep in Jesus which we generally attribute to it. It brings out the fact that in Him His people meet persecution and death, and that, though not all in the strictest sense martyrs, they have all the martyr spirit. Even when they perish then they do not die; "they rest (in contrast with verse 11) from their labours, and their works (an entirely different word from 'labour') follow with them"; their Christian character and life, giving them a meetness for the "rest," follow *with* them. They enter the state beyond the grave fitted for its joys. Once more, in the New Jerusalem, which we have seen cause to interpret as the ideal of the Christian Church on earth, "death shall be no more."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand "death," in the Apocalypse, is always associated (just as it is in 1 John iii. 14) with the evil, the hateful, the unloving, and the wrath of God,<sup>2</sup> until it culminates in the "second death," which is "the lake of fire."<sup>3</sup> In no part either of the Gospel, the first Epistle, or the Apocalypse, do we read of the second life.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxi. 4.

xiii. 3, 12; xviii. 8; xx. 13,

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. ii. 23; vi. 8; ix. 6;

14.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xx. 14.



Not only, however, does the life given in Christ, according to both the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, rise superior to death, it rises also superior to judgment. Nothing can be more emphatic in this respect than the teaching of the Gospel. "He that heareth My word," says our Lord, "and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."<sup>1</sup> The preceding verses stated the work of the Son *as it has been given Him by the Father*; this verse states the same work *in its effect upon believers*. All judgment is given unto the Son;<sup>2</sup> into this judgment he that believeth does not come.<sup>3</sup> The believer has passed into a state to which judgment does not apply. He has received into himself that word which will at the last day judge all who reject it.<sup>4</sup> In like manner we read of Christ, "He that believeth in Him is not judged."<sup>5</sup> No teaching could be either more definite or more characteristic.

But the very same view meets us in the Apocalypse, and, of all the books of the New Testament, in the Apocalypse alone. Thus in chap. xi. 18 the action of that great day when the Lord takes unto Him His great power and reigns is clearly distinguished into two parts, one, "And the nations were wroth, and Thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged"; the other, "And the time to give reward to Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, the small and the great." In the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v. 24.<sup>2</sup> Verse 22.<sup>3</sup> Verse 24.<sup>4</sup> Chap. xii. 48.<sup>5</sup> Chap. iii. 18.

great day spoken of none of the latter classes here mentioned are "judged." The most important proof of the same point is to be found in chap. xx. 11-15, in the description given of what is so often supposed to be the general judgment. A more careful examination of the passage leads to the conclusion that it describes, not the general judgment, but a judgment of the wicked alone. In the first place, the word *ἐκρίθησαν*, "were judged," of verse 12 can properly apply only to them. It is used seven times in the Apocalypse in addition to the two times it occurs in the verses before us. One of the nouns derived from it (*κρίσις*) is used four, and another (*κρίμα*) three times. In every case these words denote, not a mere process of trial where a sentence of acquittal *may* be pronounced, but a judgment tending to condemnation. The use of "were judged" in the passage now under consideration would be a solitary exception to this rule did it here refer to the judgment of the good as well as the wicked. The improbability is therefore great that it has such a reference. In the second place, the books opened in verse 12 are books containing the record of none but evil deeds. In direct contrast to them the "book of life" is spoken of with the names written in it of the saved. It harmonises with this, that the book of life is not expressly mentioned as used to prove of any that they were to escape the lake of fire, but only (verse 15) that the condemned were condemned justly, because their names were not found written in it. In the third place, the mention of the

quarters from which "the dead" appear leads to the same conclusion. They are three, "the sea," "death," and "Hades." That "the sea" is not the ocean can hardly admit of a moment's doubt. In that sense it would form no proper parallel to death and Hades; few comparatively could come from it; and in chap. xxi. 1, where we read, "And there was no more sea," it cannot be literally understood. The "sea," therefore, is the emblem of all disorder and confusion; from it the wicked alone can rise. "Death," again, cannot be the neutral grave, for it is cast into the lake of fire; and a similar remark applies to Hades.<sup>1</sup> The sea, death, Hades, all are symbolical, and symbolical only of what is bad. Not one of them has in it any righteous to give up. The whole passage is applicable to the judgment of the ungodly, and to that alone. For the godly there is no judgment, or it is already past.

This view is sufficiently remarkable, but it is not more so than the statement of the Apocalypse regarding (apparently) two resurrections in chap. xx. We have already considered the question connected with the two resurrections, and have seen that the "first resurrection" is purely spiritual,—a resurrection of "souls" out of death into life.<sup>2</sup> Upon this point it is needless to say more.

Let us turn to the fourth Gospel, and is there any part of its teaching more characteristic than that contained in the words of Jesus to the Jews at the pool of Bethesda? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, An hour

<sup>1</sup> Comp. chap. vi. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures*, vi. p. 218.

cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that have heard shall live. . . . Marvel not at this: because an hour cometh, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and they that have done good shall go forth unto a resurrection of life, but they that have committed evil unto a resurrection of judgment.”<sup>1</sup> In these words we have the same two resurrections, if the “first resurrection” necessarily imply a second, that we find in chap. xx. of the Apocalypse. The “dead” of verse 25 are spiritually dead. In regard to them alone could it be said that the “hour” spoken of has already begun (“an hour cometh, *and now is*”), or would the limitation of the last words of the verse, “*they that have heard,*” be in place. They that have so heard, though they were dead, live,—the first resurrection. That in verses 28, 29 the future alone is spoken of is clear from the omission of the words, “and now is,” found in verse 25. This resurrection is wholly different from the last, for the words, “all that are in the graves” (not “all that have heard”) shall “go forth” (not shall “live”), together with the mention of two great classes, “they that have done good unto a resurrection of life,” “they that have committed evil unto a resurrection of judgment,” show that a general, or second, resurrection is before us.

One point still remains to be noticed, not because, like those now considered, it is in any special sense characteristic of the two books of which we speak, for it per-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v. 25, 28, 29.

vades the whole New Testament, but because its presence in the fourth Gospel has been often and emphatically denied. We refer to the Second Coming of the Lord. Of that topic the Apocalypse is full; but it is urged that the Gospel understands by Christ's Second Coming something purely spiritual, the establishing of His dominion in the hearts of men. Such a view can only be taken where the Gospel is misunderstood. The words of chap. xx. 22, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" admit of no interpretation but that of a personal, local, coming of the Lord. The same thing may be said of the frequent allusions to the subject in chaps. xiv.-xvi. There the "coming" is always in direct contrast to the "going away"; and, if we are to understand the former of an inward manifestation by Jesus of Himself to the believer, we shall be compelled to understand the latter of His leaving the believer to spiritual separation from Him. The impossibility of doing this will be felt by any one who substitutes, in such passages as John xiv. 3, 18, 19, 23, 28; xvi. 5, 7, 16, 17, 22, the latter for the former thought. The words are instantly deprived of all meaning; and that personal, local departure must be understood which shall be followed by a personal and local return. In its expectation of such a "coming" of Christ, the fourth Gospel, while no doubt laying greater emphasis upon the believer's present possession of eternal life, does not differ from the other books of the New Testament or from the Apocalypse among them. The eschatological teaching, therefore, pre-

viously adverted to, may be left to make its full impression on the mind.

The various points of comparison between the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel which have now been adduced are sufficient to show that the two books so greatly resemble one another as to lend a high degree of probability to the belief that both proceeded from the same pen.

It may indeed be urged that in what has been said we have dealt largely in details, and that details afford no proper basis of argument in a matter of the kind. To a certain extent this is true, and the following remarks of Reuss may be unhesitatingly accepted—“Details can furnish no conclusive proof, either by the analogies or the variations they may offer, because, after all, it is unquestionably apostolic and Christian teaching that we have before us (he means in both books), and it is inevitable that certain evangelical facts and fundamental convictions should be occasionally reproduced, and that the particular design of each book and other external circumstances should modify the choice and the expression of them. It will not be, then, by the comparison of individual texts or formulas that any decisive result will be reached in a critical inquiry of this kind.”<sup>1</sup> This remark of the veteran critic is true; but the following observations may be made.

(1) Details in which a certain correspondence might be expected have not alone been dealt with. Those

<sup>1</sup> *Christ. Theol. of the Apost. Age*, ii. p. 507.

selected have been for the most part *characteristic of the writer* among the different writers of the New Testament. They have pointed to a strongly-marked individuality both of thought and of expression. They have been such as to enable us to say with perfect confidence that the writer of the fourth Gospel was neither one of the first three Evangelists nor St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. Jude, and that from these persons the writer of the Apocalypse is equally distinct. Is it possible, then, that the author of the former book may also have been the author of the latter? We have seen in a multitude of particulars that the same characteristics appear in both, that the individuality of each is the same, and that the correspondence between them leads to the conviction that in the one we recognise the other. Details of such a nature form the legitimate basis of an argument.

(2) To details even of this kind we have not confined ourselves. Let the reader recall the particulars adverted to; more especially let him recall what has been said in the Lectures of the earlier volume, and he will not deny that the "general tone and tendency" of the two books has been as much before us as details. The main stress of the argument has indeed been rested on this fact. There is in each book a mode of conceiving the whole purpose and plan of God in His dealings with mankind, the whole manifestation of Christ, and the whole nature of the Christian Dispensation, which, while it distinguishes the writer of each from the other sacred writers, brings the two writers

into the nearest possible relation to one another. While studying visions of the Apocalypse, such as those of the "glories" of chaps. v. and vi., of the death and resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses in chap. xi.,<sup>1</sup> of the woman with the man child in chap. xii.,<sup>2</sup> and of the assault of the ten horns and of the beast upon the harlot in chap. xvii., the student is often startled to find how powerfully he is reminded of passages of the fourth Gospel conveying the very same truths in a didactic form. So far from meeting, as Reuss alleges, "two types of Christian teaching which could not dwell simultaneously in the same mind,"<sup>3</sup> he meets *precisely the same type*, differing only in this, that in the one case the light is revealed in Christ, in the other in the members of His body; that what is taught historically of the former is taught in symbol of the latter; and that the period of Christian development treated of in the Gospel belongs to Christ's conflict with the world as it revealed itself in "the Jews," while in that treated of in the Apocalypse the Church is in conflict with the world as revealed in the tumultuous surging of the Gentile nations. No book of the New Testament goes more beyond the scope of Judaism than the Apocalypse; none is more ideal in its conception of the universality, the completeness and the spirituality of the Christian Church. Reuss's mistake is that of the ordinary interpreters of the book, who look on it as historical instead of ideal, and who fail to see that it is simply the completion of that com-

<sup>1</sup> Comp. John xii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. John xvi. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *u.s.* p. 507.



pound thought connected with Christ's coming which the Gospel had but partially disclosed. The Gospel sets this thought before us so far as to show the manner in which at His coming Christ entered into the hearts of men. The Apocalypse starts with the fact that in this respect He has come, and has only further to guide those who have received Him through the same trials as His own to that glory which He enjoys now, and which shall also be made theirs when He comes again without sin unto salvation. It is absurd therefore to dwell upon a tone of love in the Gospel and of vengeance in the Apocalypse, as if the two were inconsistent with each other. Even were there not, what we have seen there is, as much severity in the former as in the latter, as much love in the latter as in the former, the vengeance spoken of is determined by the object. Nor is it really vengeance. It is the vindication of righteousness. It is the echo of the words of Jesus, "Hear what the unrighteous Judge saith. And shall not God avenge His elect which cry to Him day and night,"<sup>1</sup> or of the words of the Old Testament adopted by St. Paul, "Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense, saith the Lord."<sup>2</sup> There is no more inconsistency between Christ's being at once the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Good Shepherd than between the two aspects of His manifestation of Himself in the tender Gospel of St. Luke, in which He is at once the Physician of souls and the corner stone upon which "every one that falleth shall be

<sup>1</sup> Luke xviii. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xii. 19.

broken to pieces ; but, on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.”<sup>1</sup> Even Reuss allows that this type of teaching is “not incompatible with the idea of the Gospel.”<sup>2</sup> We go further and say that the two types not only may dwell in the same mind, but that they must do so in exact proportion as we approach the mind of Christ. In whom should both therefore have been more united than in “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

(3) The precise object of the argument ought to be kept distinctly in view. The defender of that unity of authorship for which we plead is not in the position of a person who has one of two books put into his hand as the production of the Apostle, and is asked to show by internal evidence that the other proceeds from the same source. The two books come to him with the almost unanimous tradition of the Church in favour of this conclusion. From the beginning both were believed to be, and were given to the world as St. John's. That some doubts gradually sprang up upon the point is true. But the tradition remained, and even gained strength in the midst of the doubts. It thus proved its vitality more effectually than it would have done had no such doubts existed. It was the firm conviction of almost all for seventeen centuries ; and this “almost all” includes scholars, writers, commentators, historians, men of inquiring as well as of sluggish minds, and heretics as well as the orthodox. What is required of us therefore, is not to discover an

<sup>1</sup> Luke xx. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *u.s.* p. 511.

unknown author, but to inquire into the probabilities of a universally-accepted authorship, and to ask whether the objections offered to it are so powerful as to constrain us to yield to them. This just weight of authority in favour of the hypothesis we have advocated, though clearly open to question and bound to show its ability to defend itself, ought never to be lost sight of when we review the grounds of a definite conclusion upon the point.

(4) It is incumbent on the opponents of the Church's belief to substitute for it a hypothesis having some claims to take its place. Attempts have been made to do so. The most specious of these—that which ascribes the Apocalypse not to the Apostle but to the Presbyter John—we have already considered and dismissed. It has never found its way to anything approaching general acceptance even among those who advocate the double authorship of the two books. A similar remark may be made on the hypothesis of Baur. That distinguished man was so much struck with the points of resemblance between the Gospel and the Apocalypse that the former became to him a “spiritualised Apocalypse,”<sup>1</sup> in which the writer, who only professes to be the Evangelist, elevates and trans-

<sup>1</sup> *K. E.* p. 380. The Apocalypse seems indeed to have spiritualised many of the current ideas of the time. We have already spoken of this in relation to the two resurrections, a point on which even the Apocalypse of Baruch seems to have differed

from the common Jewish opinion of the time (Deane in *Monthly Interpreter*, ii. 126). May not the idea of the 1000 years be in the same way the elevating and spiritualising of the reign of 400 years in 4th Esdras vii. 7, 9? It is by no means clear that the thought

figures to their purest spiritual height the conceptions he had learned from the Jewish Revelation. This hypothesis implies that the Apocalypse was written about A.D. 70, and that long afterwards, not necessarily so long as Baur imagines, some one undertook to spiritualise its picture of the Christ, and produced the Gospel. The theory is inconceivable. Even with the help of the Synoptic Gospels it is impossible that any one should have framed out of the Apocalypse such a life of Jesus as that of the fourth Gospel. Surely in thought at least (not necessarily in date) the Gospel preceded the Apocalypse, not the Apocalypse the Gospel. We can understand that a writer, different from the writer of the Gospel but with the Gospel in his hand, might depict the struggle of the Church in a manner corresponding to that of her Lord; but that one should think of drawing up from the Apocalypse a corresponding life of Christ, and should embody his ideas in the life given us by the supposed St. John, is utterly incredible. The individual might suggest the general. The general could never have suggested the individual. It was a fitting thing that the servant should be as his Master, but there was no need that the Master should have been as the servant. Besides this He is not. In Baur's view, while the servant has outward suffering, although rising superior to it, the history of the Master is an inward and spiritual process.

of 1000 years came from Judaism.  
If it be said that 1000 is no more  
spiritual than 400 the reply is  
that to the Apocalyptist through-

out almost the whole of his book  
1000 is associated with the glory  
and the happiness of heaven.

The very keynote of the theory is that the elements which the Apocalyptist had appropriated out of the realities of the Church's life, and which he had thrown into a transcendental future, the Evangelist transforms into the immanent presence of a clear and peaceful self-consciousness in Jesus. The distant heaven of the persecuted saint, for example, is transformed into the present heaven of the Redeemer's breast. But this is completely to reverse the order of things. The writer of the Gospel, as a student alike of the Old Testament and of history, must have learned the lesson of St. Paul, "Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural."<sup>1</sup> From the outward carnal picture of the Church, which had long been familiar to him, he could hardly have travelled backward to a conception of her Head so inward and spiritual as that of the Johannine Jesus is said to be. We may accept Baur's strong language as to the close resemblance of our two books, but not his solution of the problem; and nearly all later inquirers have declined to do so.

No hypothesis, indeed, has as yet been offered with regard to the composition of the Apocalypse which, while rejecting the idea of its Johannine origin, has been able to command more than the adhesion of a few; and, till this is done, the defender of unity of authorship in the case of the two books before us is entitled to the benefit of the traditional view upon the point. Nor is this all. Let us proceed upon that view. Let us try the hypothesis of ascribing both books to the same

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 46.

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author, and that author the Apostle John; and, though it cannot even then be said that every difficulty will disappear, it will be found that we are in a far better position than we should otherwise occupy for explaining the origin and meaning of both. Their harmony of plan will be made manifest; and rules of interpretation will be suggested which will cast such a flood of light upon passages otherwise almost unintelligible as to afford no small test that our hypothesis is true.

## DISCUSSION VI

### RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER OF THE SEVEN EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES IN REV. II. III.

IN Lecture III. of the previous volume, upon "The Structure and Place of the Apocalypse," some general remarks will be found upon the place occupied by what may be spoken of as artificiality of plan in the structure of a sacred writing; and an effort was then made to show that such artificiality was in no degree inconsistent with simplicity and singleness of religious aim on the writer's part. These observations it is unnecessary to repeat, and we may proceed at once to the subject immediately before us — the Epistles of Christ to the Seven Churches of Asia, contained in chapters ii. and iii. of the Apocalypse. We have to inquire into the relation of these Epistles to one another and to the idea embodied in them all.

It will be at once admitted by every competent inquirer that the number seven here employed is to be taken not so much in its numerical as in its sacred force, and that the seven churches spoken of are not merely the churches of the seven cities of Asia named,

but a representation of the Church of Christ in all countries and in all ages, down to the very end of time. All of these spread themselves out in one great panorama before the eyes of the enraptured Seer ; and in the midst of them all—knowing them, caring for them, watching over them, and Himself loved, worshipped, and obeyed—the Seer beholds the Son of Man, the great priest and king of His people, the first and the last, that liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore. The Universal Church is before us in the seven individual churches of these two chapters. Nor does this view in the slightest degree touch the fact that the particulars enumerated as to the actual condition of each of these churches are historical. Had this not been the case, the epistles would have been constructed in some other way, and the special aim with which they were written would have appeared in them. It is precisely because he does not create, but because he deals with realities, that it is difficult to determine the principles upon which he passes from one epistle to another, binding them in all the variety of their parts into a unity. We know that he had other churches in Asia at his command, and that he could have selected them had they seemed better suited to his purpose. He had also before him many additional particulars connected with each church ; and, again, he could have fixed upon some of these if they had adapted themselves to his aim. But he cannot go further than select. What he deals with is history ; what he



delineates are facts. He may combine and group ; but in no case may he imagine a state of things which did not actually exist.

The general idea being thus admitted, that the seven churches represent the whole Church ; it seems to us that we may spare our readers the trouble of inquiring whether they represent that Church in seven successive chronological periods, from the beginning to the close of the Christian era. If we examine the tables of such periods drawn up by different inquirers, we shall find them so utterly divergent as to prove fatal to the principle upon which they are constructed. No one has been able to prepare a chronological scheme making even an approach to general acceptance. The history of the Church cannot be portioned off into seven successive periods marked by characteristics to which those noted in the seven epistles correspond. Besides this, the whole idea rests upon that historical interpretation of the Apocalypse which is simply destructive both of the meaning and influence of the book. We may be excused, therefore, if, at least for the present, we let it alone. To the epistles themselves we turn as they stand before us in the sacred text. What do they themselves intimate of their relation to one another ?

1. The seven epistles are bound together into one whole. This fact has been already alluded to ; but, in order to prepare for observations yet to be made in regard to the principles upon which this whole seems to be afterwards subdivided, we shall notice briefly

one or two features of the internal structure of these epistles by which the unity of idea lying at the bottom of them may be proved. In doing so, it is unnecessary to dwell upon the consideration that precisely seven churches should be selected, or to argue that seven is the number for unity in diversity, for unity in that manifoldness of aspect in which it must present itself if it is to be entitled to the name of unity. It is almost equally unnecessary to advert to the well-known fact that, with at the utmost one exception, the descriptions of the Saviour prefixed to the several epistles are taken from the general description of Him contained in chap. i. The one exception seems to be Laodicea, and we shall immediately see that it is possible to give a reasonable explanation of the choice made of those attributes of the exalted Lord upon which the epistle to that church dwells. Nor need we do more than mention the call to the hearers embraced in each epistle, which is a call not to the individual church alone, but to the Church Universal,—“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the *churches*.” We shall notice only,—what has been less dwelt upon than these points,—that the description of the Lord given in the first and last epistles has an obvious application to the churches addressed in more than their individual capacity. While each of these epistles has its own place in the series, it is at the same time treated as the first or the last member of a group which must be regarded as one whole.

Thus to the church in Ephesus the Saviour describes Himself as "He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."<sup>1</sup> The description has no more reference to Ephesus than to any other of the churches named; and no special bond can be pointed out between it and any threatening or promise of that particular epistle. In like manner to the church in Laodicea the Saviour describes Himself as "the Amen, the Witness faithful and true, the Beginning of the creation of God."<sup>2</sup> The first of these appellations is no doubt derived from Isaiah lxxv. 16, where we have twice repeated in the same verse the formula "God Amen"; and the meaning of the name as applied to Jesus is, not that all the Divine promises shall be accomplished by Him, but that He is Himself the fulfilment of every promise made by the Almighty to His people. The second appellation carries us directly to John xviii. 37, where Jesus replies to Pilate's question in the words, "To this end have I been born, and to this end have I come into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth." His whole mission is summed up by Him in the idea of witnessing. He is the perfect, the true, the real witness to eternal truth in its deepest sense, in its widest and most comprehensive range. The third appellation, again, cannot be limited to the thought of the mere material creation, as if equivalent to the statement that by the Word were all things made. It would thus fail to correspond with the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. 14.

two appellations preceding it, which undoubtedly apply to the work of redemption, while at the same time the addition of the words "of God" would be meaningless or perplexing. Let us add to this that in chap. i. 5, immediately after Jesus has been called "the faithful witness," He is described as "the first begotten of the dead," and we shall not be able to resist the conviction that the words before us refer primarily to the new creation, the Christian Church, that redeemed humanity which has its true life in Christ. It is not necessary indeed to exclude the thought of the material creation; but, in so far as it is alluded to, it is only as redeemed, in its final condition of rest and glory, when the New Jerusalem has come down out of heaven, and when the Church's enemies have been cast into the lake of fire.<sup>1</sup> All the three appellations, it will be observed, have thus a general rather than a specific character. Again, there is no particular connexion between them and the promises or threatenings of the epistle in which they occur. Elsewhere it is different. In the epistle to Smyrna the "crown of life" is promised by Him "which was dead and lived again";<sup>2</sup> in that to Pergamum the threatening, "I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth," is uttered by Him "which hath the sword two-edged, sharp";<sup>3</sup> in that to Thyatira "all the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts," is said by

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Romans viii. 21, 22; James i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii., comp. verses 12 and 16.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. ii., comp. verses 8 and 10.

Him who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire;<sup>1</sup> in that to Sardis, a church of proud outward profession, but destitute of spiritual light and life, this deficiency of its state is pointed out by Him who "hath the seven Spirits of God";<sup>2</sup> and in that to Philadelphia the gracious intimation—"I have given before thee an opened door," is made by Him "that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no one shall shut, and shutteth and no one openeth."<sup>3</sup> In all these cases the connexion between the contents of the epistle and the aspect in which, in the first words of it, Jesus had presented Himself to the church, is distinctly traceable. But in the epistle to Laodicea, as in that to Ephesus, nothing of the kind is to be seen. The description of the Lord is general rather than special. He is the "Amen" of the Divine Counsel; He is the "Witness faithful and true," who has left no part untold of the will of Him that sent Him; He is the source and spring of the whole New Creation of God. It is no mere fancy when we say that we have in this a proof that the first and the last epistles are not simply members of a continuous series the last of which may leave the first a long way behind it, but that they are binding terms which gather up all the members of the series, and group them into one.

2. While thus bound together into one whole, the seven epistles are clearly distinguishable into two

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii., comp. verses 18 and 23.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. chap. iii. verses 7 and 8.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii., comp. verse 1, last clause, and verse 2 with verse 1.

portions, the first consisting of the first three, the second of the other four. Every inquirer admits this, and we may therefore be justified in passing quickly over the proof usually given, which rests upon the difference of place assigned in the two portions to the call—"He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches." In the first three this call comes in as a central part of the epistle, immediately before the promise to "Him that overcometh"; in the last four it closes the epistle. It may be more interesting to observe that, according to the best-attested readings of the original, another illustration of the division adopted is to be seen in the fact that in the second and third epistles, those to Smyrna and Pergamum, we do not meet the expression found in all the other epistles, "I know thy works." The circumstance is at least interesting and it demands explanation. We can think of no other than this, that in the mind of the writer the first three epistles were closely associated together, more closely perhaps than even the seven, or the last four, among themselves. The words "I know thy works," occurring in the first epistle, were thus thought to extend their influence over the second and third, much in the same way as the description of the exalted Lord in the same epistle sent its voice forward, and the description of Him in the epistle to Laodicea, its voice backward through the rest. At all events these first three epistles are a special unity; the last four are also like, and like in this respect among others, that the words

“I know thy works,” open the Lord’s address to each of them.

There is still another circumstance to be noted in connexion with the point now under consideration, which we shall notice both for the sake of the fresh proof that it affords of what has been said, and for its bearing on the question of the general structure of the Apocalypse. That structure is of vital importance in the interpretation of the book. It is a characteristic of St. John’s writings that, when he has one great truth to present to his readers, he does it under different and successive aspects, and that the relation established between these aspects is that of climax. The most striking illustration of this is probably the relation to one another of the three great series of visions in this book—the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls. But this peculiarity of structure is not confined to these visions, and among other places where we find it is the series of the epistles to the churches. The “coming” of the Lord is mentioned in each of them except in that to Smyrna, the omission in the latter being perhaps due to the fact that it occurs in the first (Ephesus) and in the last (Pergamum) of the first group of three, and that thus, on principles already indicated, it was not needed in the second (Smyrna). But the mention of it, in the two cases where it does occur, is accompanied by the addition of the words “to thee.”<sup>1</sup> These words show that it is not the general and final “coming” that is in view, but a special “coming,”

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 5, 16.

one of those more limited judgments, preparatory to the great end of all, in which the judge of men illustrates the plan of judgment that shall wind up the issues of the present dispensation. Yet even here there is climax. "I come unto thee," is said to the church at Ephesus, "I come unto thee quickly," is said to that of Pergamum.

When we pass to the remaining four epistles an instructive difference is perceptible. The words "unto thee" are dropped, and we feel that we are in the presence of a "coming" of a far more general kind than before; one, too, that rises step by step in character, and draws nearer and nearer in time. To the first of the four (Thyatira) it is said, "Hold fast until I come";<sup>1</sup> to the second (Sardis) "I will come as a thief";<sup>2</sup> to the third (Philadelphia), "I come quickly";<sup>3</sup> to the fourth (Laodicea), "Behold I stand at the door and knock."<sup>4</sup> In each of the two groups the climax at once forces itself upon the attention, thus illustrating the unity of thought in each. The difference between the two groups is thus also brought more prominently into view by the climax in the different aspects of the one thought which finds in each group its characteristic utterance.

We have now to ask what that special light is in which the Church is viewed in each of the two portions of these epistles. In connexion with this the light in which the Church is brought before us in the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. iii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. iii. 20.



separate epistles of the whole series will incidentally appear; but in the meantime, dealing with the two groups as two wholes, we have simply to determine what the common aspect of the Church in each group is. Now there are two aspects of the Church which may be said to pervade the whole Apocalypse,—first, the Church in herself; and secondly, the Church in her contest, her struggle, with the world. It seems as if the same distinction might be traced here. The first three epistles lead us more particularly to the thought of the Church in herself; the remaining four to the thought of her as she struggles with the world, yields to its influences, is partly faithful and partly unfaithful in the contest, and needs the Second Coming of her Lord in order to her fulfilment in Him and her final and complete victory over her foes.

The very numbers into which the two portions of the seven epistles are distributed illustrate this. Three is the number of the Divine; four, as shown in innumerable passages of the Apocalypse, is that of the world. The simple fact that we have a group of three, as distinguished from one of four epistles, is sufficient to lead to the impression that, in one way or another, the thought of the Divine alone is more closely associated with the former than with the latter.

This impression is confirmed when we look at the epistles themselves. Let us take the first three, and we shall find that in not one of them is the Church represented as yielding to the influences of the world. No doubt she has evil in her midst, and evil always

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springs from a worldly, not a Divine, source. But she is not as yet conscious of what she is doing; she has not yet begun to traffic with the world, to accommodate herself to it, or to lust after what it is able to bestow. The great charge against the church in Ephesus is that she has left her first love. She has passed out of the bright and joyous feelings which marked the time of her espousals to the Heavenly Bridegroom; but the evil is from within, and so far in particular as the Nicolaitans are concerned, she shares the feelings of her Lord, looking upon them with the hatred which they merit. Smyrna is not reproached at all. She is rather an object of the Lord's fervent love, who is preparing trial for her in correspondence with the great law by which He trains His people, "Every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it that it may bear more fruit." Remarks of a similar kind apply to Pergamum. There is no charge against the church there that she was allowing the world to gain dominion over her. She had certainly persons in her midst who held the teaching of the Nicolaitans, but the church is not said to have sanctioned them. On the contrary, though dwelling in the place where Satan had his throne, she had remained true to her Lord, and had been purified in the fire of persecution which had now come, and had raged even unto death. In none of the three cases is the church perfect, but in none is she really faithless to her trust. She is in danger; she needs purifying by affliction; she is purified by affliction; but she knows that he who

will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God, and the enemies of God are her enemies.

When we turn to the second group of the epistles we at once enter a different atmosphere, and the contrast is rendered more striking by the fact that, in the first of the four, we have the very sins spoken of which have already twice crossed our path, in the epistles to Ephesus and to Pergamum. In noticing this we proceed, of course, upon the supposition that, in the epistle to Thyatira, Jezebel is not the name of a real, but of a fictitious person, symbolising the character of a party in the city. Yet not in the city only; this party is also in the church, and is tolerated by the church. We must request our readers to notice the text adopted in chap. ii. 20 by the best critical editors, such as Westcott and Hort, and the effect of which is to make the clause containing mention of Jezebel complete in itself, "thou sufferest," "thou lettest alone," "thou toleratest the woman Jezebel."

We must request them also to bear in mind what seems to have been disregarded by the commentators, that Jezebel was a *heathen princess*, the first heathen queen who had been married by a king of the northern Kingdom of Israel. She was therefore peculiarly fitted to represent the influences of the world; and the charge against the first church of the second group is that she tolerated the world with its heathen thoughts and practices. She knew it to be the world that it was, but notwithstanding this she was content to be at peace, perhaps even to ally herself, with it. The

church at Sardis is not less blameable. There are a few names in her that have not defiled their garments; but the church as a whole has deeply sinned. She has reproduced the Pharisaic type with which the Gospels have made us acquainted, substituting in the first place the outward for the inward in religion, making a great profession of attention to ordinances instead of living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit, and then yielding to the sins of that flesh to which she had thus given the supremacy. Philadelphia, like Smyrna, is not blamed, and it is well that there should be one church even in the midst of the world of which this can be said. But the point now to be observed is that Philadelphia has been engaged in a struggle with the world. We learn this from chap. iii. 9, where the enemies of the church,—“Jews” they call themselves, the people of God, but “they are not,”—are set before us as vanquished nations coming before the church’s feet as she sits in the heavenly places, and paying homage to her, against whom they had so long but vainly struggled. It is impossible not to see the difference here between this church and that at Smyrna. There had been “blasphemy” in the latter case, but worse trials were only spoken of as about to come. Here the trials have come, and the church has risen triumphantly above them. Lastly, no one can mistake the willing identification of herself with the world on the part of the church of Laodicea. She says that she is “rich,” that she has “gotten her riches,” that she has “need of

nothing.”<sup>1</sup> To refer these words to spiritual self-satisfaction and pride is not only to destroy their own force but the force of verse 18 immediately following. It is worldly wealth that is in view—a church whose members have aimed at riches and have gotten them, who are well-to-do and in easy circumstances, and who have found so much comfort in their worldly goods that they have been gradually becoming blind to the fact that man needs something higher and better for his portion. In all these four churches, in short, it will be seen that we have an entirely different relation between the Church and the world from that set before us in the first three. There is not simply danger of decay within, and need of trial, or the benefit of trial; there is actual conflict with the world, sometimes it may be a victory over it, at other times a yielding to its influences and an adoption of its spirit.

Attention to the promises “to him that overcometh” in the different epistles seems to confirm what has been said. There is a marked contrast upon the whole between the tone of these promises as they are given in the two groups of epistles; and, even where a certain amount of similarity exists, the promise in the second group will be found to be fuller and richer than in the first. At Ephesus, at Smyrna, and at Pergamum, “he that overcometh” is rewarded much as one in a simple and child-like state would be. The first promise made to him is that he shall eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God; the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iii. 17.

second that he shall not be hurt of the second death ; the third that he shall eat of the hidden manna and be like the high-priest in the innermost recesses of the sanctuary. All is quiet, appealing to the gentler susceptibilities of the soul—the privileges and enjoyments of a happy child that has not yet known the struggle of life. Not so when we turn to the second group of epistles. There we at once enter upon rewards conceived in bolder and more manly figures. The first promise now is “ he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations, and as a shepherd he shall tend them with a sceptre of iron, as vessels of the potter are they broken to pieces.”<sup>1</sup> This is the reward of victory upon well-fought fields. The warrior who is thus crowned must have braved the strife and won with difficulty.

The second promise is not less marked in its character. He that overcometh shall not simply, as in the case of Smyrna, receive the reward of “ not being hurt of the second death ” ; he shall be “ arrayed in white garments,” in the glistening robe of the triumphant conqueror, and Jesus will “ confess his name before His Father and before His angels.”<sup>2</sup> The third promise is at least a large extension of that given to Pergamum, for of him that now “ overcometh,” it is said, “ I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall come no more forth,” that is, shall come no more forth to a struggle with the world similar to that in which he has been engaged, “ and I

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 26, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. 5.

will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God, and Mine own new name";<sup>1</sup> while the fourth promise has been well described by Dean Plumptre as the very "apotheosis of victory,"—"He that overcometh I will give unto him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father in His Throne."<sup>2</sup> All the promises of the second group of epistles, in short, are clearly distinguished in tone and spirit from those of the first group. They pre-suppose a fiercer struggle, a hotter conflict, and they are therefore full of a more glorious reward.

Such then it appears to us is the relation of the seven churches among themselves. In endeavouring to determine it, we have simply followed the lines laid down by the sacred writer, and have contented ourselves with dividing the epistles into their two main groups. We find in them no successive chronological periods, but simply representations of the two leading ideas which we must form of the Church,—as she is in herself; and as she is when, having declined as a whole from her early purity, she makes a compromise with the world, allows it in part to prevail over her, and sacrifices the future for the present. In the first group of three we have the Church considered in herself. She is full of toil and endurance, in her poverty she is rich, and the troubles of the future she does not fear; she holds fast the name of Christ, and

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. 21.

openly confesses Him. It is true that seeds of evil are within her which will too soon develop themselves, but this is her Divine character as a whole. She walks with God and hears His voice in her earthly paradise. If discipline is needed, by discipline she is purified. In the second group the evil seed sown by the enemy has sprung up. The Church tolerates the evil around her, makes her league with the world, and yields to its sins; she rallies indeed at times to her new and higher life, but she finally submits to the world, and is satisfied with its goods. Even then indeed there are many faithful ones in her midst. As in the Jewish Church there was a "remnant according to the election of grace," so in her there are never wanting those who listen to the Saviour's voice and follow Him. But they are not the Church as a whole; and, as in the days of the Saviour's flesh, they must eventually come out of her that they may follow Him whithersoever He goeth. It is the same sad story indeed which has marked all the previous dispensations of the Almighty with His people in this world, and which will continue to be acted out until the Second Coming of the Lord. It is the same picture which is afterwards presented to us in this Book of Revelation, when the Bride, allying herself with the world, becomes a harlot, and the Seer hears "another voice out of heaven saying, Come forth, My people, out of her, that ye may have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xviii. 4.



## APPENDIX

NOTE, p. 142

THROUGH the kindness of my friend and colleague, Professor W. M. Ramsay, I have been allowed to see some proof sheets of a work on *The Church in the Roman Empire*, which he is at this moment passing through the press. My own book being now wholly printed, it is impossible to make use in its text of the conclusions to which Professor Ramsay's learning and historical skill have led him, when dealing with the persecutions of Christians in the first century. I am permitted, however, to indicate one or two of them. In an elaborate argument, founded upon the original authorities, he shows that, while Christians were more or less persecuted from the days of Nero onward to those of Trajan, there was an essential difference between the principle and spirit of persecution as conducted at these two dates; and that the great change took place under the Flavian Dynasty, and more particularly about the beginning of the reign of Domitian. He finds further that the allusions to persecution contained in the Apocalypse belong to this later stage of it, and are inapplicable to the form in which it existed in the time of Nero and the years immediately following. In the course of his interesting investigations Professor Ramsay has occasion to speak of the date of the Apocalypse, when he expresses his belief upon that point in the following words:—"There can remain no doubt that the preceding exposition forces us to date it not earlier than about A.D. 90."



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Christ's work in Heaven ; hence her function is primarily priestly,—she is priestly in the consecration of her own life, priestly in her self-sacrifice for humanity, priestly in her worship. Hence her central act of worship is the Eucharist, which emphasises the thought of *offering* and in which she receives the life which she has to reproduce.

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“Strictly speaking, He does not ‘fulfil’ both orders. He fulfils the lower because He is of the ‘higher.’ He then proceeds to draw out all that is meant by the priesthood of Melchizedek, and its meaning when applied to the priesthood of our Lord. The next two chapters are full of interest, in these he shows the work of the Heavenly High Priest, which is fourfold; to offer, to intercede, to bless, and to impart the gift of the Holy Spirit. In these chapters we would call attention to the clear view of the Atonement, carried out more fully in a long and careful note in the Appendix, and the valuable distinction between offering and intercession, the one, indeed, implying the other, and both continuous and unceasing. . . .

“The fourth lecture is entirely devoted to the great work of the Heavenly High Priest, the gift of the Spirit, and is a wonderful essay in itself on that most mysterious subject. The point on which the author lays especial stress is this—that ‘the Spirit promised as the chief gift of the New Covenant is pervaded by human as well as Divine elements. As the Spirit of the exalted and glorified Lord, He is not the Third Person of the Trinity in His absolute and metaphysical existence, but that Person as He is mediated through the Son, who is human as well as Divine’ (p. 189). And that the Eastern Church has suffered from the rejection of the dogma of the double Procession. It is impossible to speak too highly of much of the conclusion of this address.

“The idea of the last two lectures is, that our Lord comes to His people on earth, and consecrating them by His Spirit, calls them to occupy His place—the Church is therefore priestly. This commission to the Church is to appear in her life, her work, her worship, and her confession. It is, of course, in these chapters that we shall miss the full enunciation of the Church’s great work which gathers round her Apostolic ministry. And yet these lectures contain a breadth of catholicity for which we cannot be too thankful.

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*November 1892*

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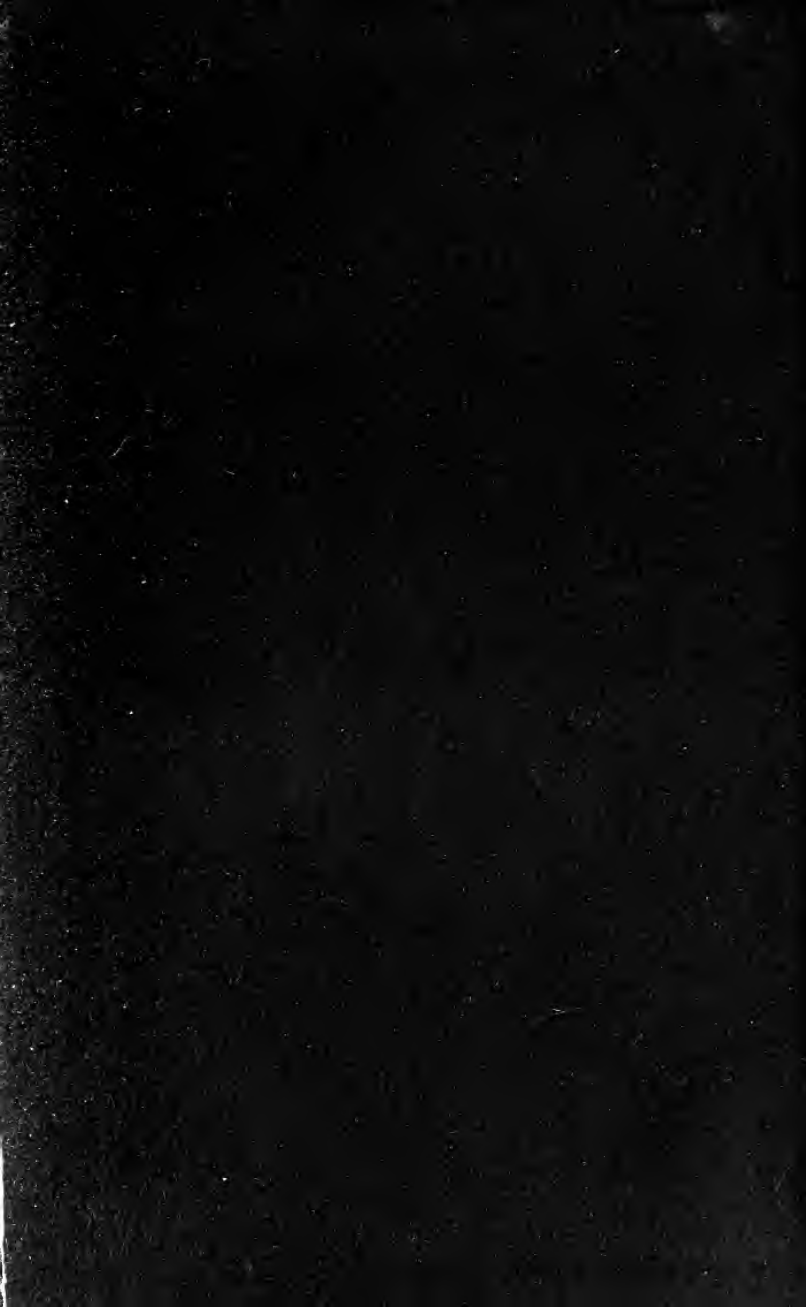
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